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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

LONG TERM EFFECTS OF MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAMS ON MARITAL QUALITY

BY

HEATHER Z'ANNE HARVEY

(C)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE

IN

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY STUDIES

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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DEDICATION

To my Mom and Dad for their unending love, and their part in preparing me for my own marriage by their example of a loving and vital relationship. And to my fiance, for the depth of meaning we have shared in our own marriage preparation experiences.

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the long term effects of marriage preparation programs on marital quality. Two general objectives were to determine the long term effects of marriage preparation programs on marital quality, and to examine whether the nature of the marriage preparation program experience, and the backgrounds of the individuals themselves influence marital quality.

Using Socialization theory (Brim, 1966) two models were derived based on the two objectives stated above. The subjects, recruited using a multi-method approach, were intact couples in their first marriage. Each individual completed a questionnaire that included the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (Spanier, 1976) to measure marital quality and 54 other questions to operationalize the variables included in the two models.

No statistically significant relationship between participating in a marriage preparation program, and marital quality was found. It was concluded that the relationship between marriage preparation participation and marital quality is complex. Only marital

counseling was found to have a statistically significant relationship to marital quality in Model One.

In Model Two, the nature of the agent-learner relationship was best explained by two factors: Social Climate and Program Interaction. It was found that a higher level of religious involvement resulted in a more positive Social Climate score. A higher level of education, and being employed resulted in higher Program Interaction. In turn, a higher level of Program Interaction resulted in higher marital quality.

In Model Two, there was a statistically significant direct effect of having lived together on marital quality, but no indirect effect operating through the nature of the agent-learner relationship. Those who were living together at the time of marriage preparation had subsequently lower marital quality at the time of long term evaluation.

Both the significant and nonsignificant findings and their interpretations are important to marriage preparation program planning and facilitation.

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I also acknowledge the participants who so willingly completed the questionnaires for this study. Many times when things were very stressful, and I was

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the area of mental health, primary prevention is an alternative to the mental health profession's original focus of "... making sick people less sick" (Cowen, 1985, p.11). Primary prevention is now "... an active, energetic movement...that seeks to develop programs (actions/interventions) to forestall psychological problems and/or to build strengths and competencies that favor psychological wellness" (Cowen, 1985, p.11). One type of program developed under the primary prevention concept is marriage preparation. Marriage preparation programs are programs that usually occur in a group format which is didactic and/or experiential (Bagarozzi & Rauen, 1981). There are two overall goals in marriage preparation programs: 1. the prevention of marital distress and breakdown, through acquisition and use of skills that will enhance marital quality (Markman & Floyd, 1980; Mace, 1972; Olson, 1983); and 2. the preparation for married life through a focus on various topics and issues such as sexuality, finances and role expectations, that are a part of married life (Olson, 1983). Because primary

prevention programs are "inoculative" (Cowen, 1985, p.11), it is important to evaluate whether marriage preparation programs really result in higher marital quality for couples who participate.

A review of the marriage preparation evaluation literature reveals a number of gaps and issues in the research. First, although there are a number of short term evaluations of marriage preparation, there is only a minimal number of long term or follow-up evaluations (Bagarozzi & Rauen, 1981). Second, the overall goals of specific marriage preparation programs are not always clearly stated in the research. However, as stated earlier, the two overall goals appear to be preparation and prevention. Third, past researchers have evaluated only one, or maybe two programs in each study, whereas evaluations of a number of programs simultaneously would be useful for comparison purposes (Bagarozzi & Rauen, 1981). Finally, the conceptual and operational definitions of the dependent variable in each of the studies were different. Also, similar conceptual and operational definitions were sometimes used for different terms such as marital quality, marital satisfaction and marital adjustment. Current researchers will find it useful to choose the best

conceptual and operational definitions already developed and build on them, instead of each researcher in the field appearing to start over with new conceptual and operational definitions. This strategy will allow knowledge in this area to be confirmative and comparative, which does not appear to have occurred to a large degree in the past.

Statement of the Problem

This study's two objectives address some of these gaps and issues in past research. The researcher determined the long term effect of marriage preparation programs on marital quality. Secondly, the researcher examined whether the nature of the marriage preparation program experience, and the backgrounds of couples who participated influenced the outcome variable of marital quality. All participants were in a first marriage and married six to forty-two months. The researcher did not directly seek out a separate group of couples who were in marital counselling. Statistical analyses of the questionnaire data was carried out.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In general, marriage preparation literature focuses on either describing a marriage preparation program's objectives and content, or evaluating some part of the marriage preparation program. Because this study is focusing on the effect of marriage preparation programs, the program evaluation literature will be the focus.

The literature review that follows is organized in terms of the issues in marriage preparation program evaluation research. The issues include: 1. the overall goal of marriage preparation programs; 2. the short term and long term follow-up evaluation of marriage preparation programs; 3. the marriage preparation programs evaluated; 4. the dependent variables used; 5. the independent and control variables used; and 6. sampling issues. Finally, the long term evaluation studies of marriage enrichment programs are reviewed in order to supplement the information about long term effectiveness available in the marriage preparation program literature. Because the marriage enrichment programs are also focusing on

the goal of enhanced marital quality (Gurman & Kniskern, 1977) a review of their results offers parallel and relevant information to the review. Following the above mentioned sections is a summary of how this study will deal with the issues and gaps discussed.

The Overall Goal of Marriage Preparation Programs

Prevention and preparation describe the overall goals or main objectives of most marriage preparation programs (Burgess & Locke, 1953; Mace, 1972; Olson, 1983). These goals are not independent of each other, but are seen as different positions on a continuum that includes the ultimate goal of prevention. In practice, marriage preparation program objectives stop short of the end of the continuum and use the preparation objective as their final goal. Unfortunately, the prevention and preparation overall goals of the program are not always concisely and clearly stated in the evaluation literature.

The preventive goal consists of minimizing marital distress (Markman & Floyd, 1980), marital breakdown (Mace, 1972; Olson, 1983), and enhancing the quality of

the interpersonal relationship by teaching various communication and problem solving skills (Mace, 1972; Olson, 1983). Past studies show that couples who have more effective communication are more likely to have higher marital quality and that is why therapists and programmers include such skills in their programs (Lewis & Spanier, 1979). Geiss & O'Leary (1981) found that, according to marital therapists, problems with communication had the "... most damaging effect on marital relationships..." (p.531).

In the long term, many program developers and implementers hope that the skills taught and information imparted in the program will provide benefits for the relationship quality of the couple (Ridley, Jorgensen, Morgan & Avery, 1982; Markman & Floyd, 1980; Bagarozzi & Rauen, 1981; Markman, Jamieson & Floyd, 1983, Ridley & Bain, 1983; Nickols, Fournier & Nickols, 1986). Relationship quality is used here in a broad sense because each of the authors defined relationship quality in a slightly different manner. For example, Markman & Floyd (1980) taught skills in their program that were found to be important in "... developing and maintaining a successful rewarding relationship..." (p.38). In contrast, Nickols,

Fournier & Nickols (1986) were speaking of relationship quality when they wanted couples "... to learn and practice skills which enhance relationships" (p.564).

Fowers & Olson (1986) suggest that there are ten areas that marriage preparation programs should include to aid couples in developing more satisfying relationships. These areas are suggested based on the ten PREPARE[1] categories that most clearly discriminated between satisfied and dissatisfied couples two to three years after they had completed the PREPARE inventory . They are: 1. realistic expectations; 2. personality issues; 3. communication; 4. conflict resolution; 5. leisure activities; 6. financial management; 7. sexuality; 8. family and friends; 9. equalitarian roles; and 10. religion (Fowers & Olson, 1986).

The other overall goal of marriage preparation is to prepare couples for marriage. The belief is that couples need to "... be more prepared to face the realities and challenges of marriage" (Olson, 1983, p.73). Programs consist of anticipatory socialization for married life; that is they anticipate and provide information in content areas for couples. Content included in many marriage preparation programs is

1 PREmarital Personal and Relationship Evaluation

similar to that suggested in Fowers & Olson's study (1986). By having couples learn communication, conflict resolution and problem solving skills along with discussing information in different content areas such as roles and sexuality, (Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willett & Conway, 1980; Schumm & Denton, 1980; Bagarozzi & Bagarozzi, 1982) couples are prepared for the many issues and changes that occur in married life.

Because there appear to be two overall goals to marriage preparation, along with many hundreds of specific short term content and skill objectives, there is a need for research that evaluates programs' success in meeting these goals.

Short Term and Long Term Follow-up Marriage Preparation Program Evaluations

The literature on marriage preparation program evaluation includes many short term evaluations (e.g. Markman & Floyd, 1980; Ridley, Avery, Dent & Harrell, 1981; Keep, 1984). Short term means the evaluation of the program occurs immediately following the program or within a few weeks of its completion. Therefore, couples may not have married at the point of short term

evaluation of the program. In the majority of short term studies, couples report a significant gain in areas such as the amount of effective communication with their partner, their relationship satisfaction and their ability to handle problems (e.g. Jessee & Guerney, 1981; Nickols, Fournier & Nickols, 1986; Ridley & Bain, 1983; Schlein, 1971). But there are some short term studies where the program had no effect at posttest on the couple's communication skills (e.g. Boike, 1977)

The majority of studies in the 1970's and early 1980's did not examine long term effects. A follow-up is when the dependent variable is measured not immediately after the program but after a period of time has passed. The small number of long term follow-ups is problematic because the two overall goals of these programs are to prevent marital distress and enhance marital quality, and prepare couples for marriage. In short term evaluations, the couples have not married so the results do not help researchers understand whether the programs met their overall long term goals that relate to marital quality.

A review by Bagarozzi & Rauen (1981) summarized the methodologies and results of thirteen studies.

Only three of the thirteen programs had any type of follow-up measure (Meadow & Taplin, 1970; Microys & Bader, 1977; Ridley et al., 1979). Bagarozzi & Rauen (1981) stress that it is essential that future research employ both control groups and follow-up studies if any sound conclusions about marriage preparation programs are to be made. They state that even short term evaluations with control groups cannot provide us with any information about whether the program with its content and skill components does increase later marital success or satisfaction.

In recent years there have been a few more long term follow-up evaluation studies. The majority of them occur six months to a year after respondents' participation in the program (Avery, Ridley, Leslie & Milholland, 1980; Ridley & Bain, 1983; Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willett & Conway, 1980). It is not clear in the Avery et al. (1980) and Ridley & Bain (1983) studies how long the couples had been married at the time the long term effect was studied because the time was measured as time since the marriage preparation program. Therefore, it is not clear if all the couples were even married at the time of the follow-up study. For example, if a couple had enrolled in the program a

year before their wedding, which does occur, they may have been married for a very short time or not married at all at the time of the follow-up study. In neither of these studies do they discuss how this variability might affect the results. It is suggested that the couples in the follow-up who have not yet married would not accurately represent the effect the program has had on married couples' marital quality.

There are three methodologically strong marriage preparation program evaluations that include a long term follow-up of more than a year (Bader, Riddle & Sinclair, 1981; Bagarozzi, Bagarozzi, Anderson & Pollane, 1984; and Markman, Floyd, Stanley & Storaasli, 1988). The only Canadian study with a long term follow-up at five years confirmed its earlier one year follow-up findings that,

> small group discussions held prior to the marriage and again after six months of marriage do have a positive effect on the couple's ability to confront marital conflict, resolve their conflicts constructively, and to seek appropriate help when needed (Bader, Riddle & Sinclair, 1981).

The wide variability in socioeconomic status and education of the participants, and the use of a matched

control group throughout the longitudinal study were strengths of this study. One limitation of this study acknowledged by the authors was the small sample size (N = 30).

Along with their pretest and posttest of treatment and control groups, Bagarozzi et al. include a three year follow-up of their program participants. At this point all the couples from the program would be married, would have delayed marriage or would have ended the relationship. Thus the researcher had a better indication of the long term effects of the program on relationship quality. Unfortunately their sample size dropped by three couples by the third year follow-up leaving only eight couples in the Premarital Education and Training Sequence (PETS) program group and seven in the control group. Separate analyses for husbands and wives in each group could not be done due to the small sample size. As a result the researchers could not make any conclusions as to whether husbands and wives were differentially affected by the program. Only an immediate effect for the PETS program was found (Bagarozzi et al., 1984). Couples in the program had a statistically significant increase in the "... total percentage of rewarding and reinforcing statements

exchanged..." (Bagarozzi et al., 1984, p.95) at posttest[2]. A larger sample size and the use of a comparison treatment group (i.e. another marriage preparation program) would have improved this long term evaluation strategy.

The final and most recent follow-up article also had the most scientifically sound methodology. Markman, Floyd, Stanley & Storaasli (1988) randomly assigned forty-two couples planning marriage to either the treatment group who participated in a cognitive-behavioral marital distress prevention program or the matched control group. The treatment and control groups were matched on the following four variables at pretreatment: engaged versus planning marriage; relationship satisfaction; communication impact; and confidence in getting married.

The program focused on "... communication and problem-solving skills, clarifying and sharing expectations, and sensual/sexual enhancement" (Markman et al., 1988, p.210). The method included a pretest,

---

2 This finding is related to marital quality because according to the philosophy of the PETS program, couples who negotiate more satisfying and equitable exchanges will be less likely to enter marriage with unmet needs that often lead to frustration and disappointment later in marriage.

posttest, one and a half year and three year follow-up. The researchers suggested that the results show that premarital programs "... prevent the declines in marital quality that occur in most relationships over time..." (Markman et al., 1988, p.215). It was found that the treatment couples maintained their positive scores on the self-report measures[3] of relationship quality while those in the control group declined towards dysfunction or dissolution of the relationship.

One caution Markman et al. (1988) mention is that approximately sixty per cent of the treatment group declined to participate in the program or did not complete the whole study. "Thus, couples who decided to complete the intervention [program] may have been more likely to function better in the first place, despite the random assignment of couples to matched groups" (Markman et al., 1988, p.215). This is the problem of self-selection which occurs in many pieces of social science research and this study did make a valid effort to minimize its effects. These researchers suggest that the self-selection problem

---

3 The self report inventories used were the Marital Adjustment Test (MAT) (Locke & Wallace, 1959), the Relationship Problem Inventory (Knox, 1970) and the Sexual Dissatisfaction Scale (Snyder, 1979).

could be addressed by having comparison treatment or placebo-control groups, or one could assess directly the factors that affect self-selection. This problem of self-selection will also be a limitation in this research study.

The Markman et al. (1988) study was found to be the best example to date of a long term evaluation of a marriage preparation program's effect on marital quality. Current research can build on the strong methodology of this 1988 study.

Marriage Preparation Programs Evaluated

In the marriage preparation literature, a great variety of marriage preparation programs were evaluated. Many short and long term studies evaluated different programs. As a result, there are fewer studies that can be directly compared with one another on the basis of evaluating the same program and objectives. Studies that evaluate the same program usually involve the same author(s). Reliability and validity of the results would be increased greatly if different researchers evaluated the same program.

Some of the programs that have been evaluated are: 1. the Premarital Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) (Markman & Floyd, 1980; Markman, Jamieson & Floyd, 1983; Markman, Floyd, Stanley & Storaasli, 1988); 2. the Program for Relationship Improvement by Maximizing Empathy and Self Disclosure (PRIMES) (Schlein, 1971; D'Augelli, Deyss, Guerney, Hershenberg & Sbordfsky, 1974); 3. (Minnesota) Couple Communication Program (Miller, 1971; Miller, 1977, Huppert, 1984); 4. the Guerney Relationship Enhancement program (RE) (Avery, Ridley, Leslie & Milholland, 1980; Ridley, Avery, Dent & Harrell, 1981; Ridley & Bain, 1983); 5. Bader's marriage preparation program (untitled in Bader et al., 1980); 6. Preparation for Marriage Workshop (Nickols, Fournier & Nickols, 1986); 7. Premarital Education and Training Sequence (PETS) (Bagarozzi, Bagarozzi. Anderson & Pollane, 1984); and 8. many others that are untitled (see, for example Bagarozzi & Rauen, 1981). Most of the studies only evaluated one marriage preparation program.

A few studies compare two programs (e.g. Ridley, Avery, Dent & Harrell, 1981), but only the review articles include any multi-program comparisons. These

reviews do not use statistical analyses to compare the programs they discuss. Current empirical research that evaluates a number of marriage preparation programs simultaneously would be helpful for implementing statistical comparisons.

Dependent Variables Used in Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation

A parallel to the great variety in the programs evaluated is the great variety in the dependent variables used to measure the effect. Even if a study uses the same term for their dependent variable, such as 'marital satisfaction', they may use diferent conceptual and/or operational definitions. For example, one study will use the term relationship satisfaction (Markman, Jamieson & Floyd, 1983) and operationalize it with the Premarital Adjustment Test (PMAT); while another study will use the term marital satisfaction and operationalize it using a 9-item scale (Orden & Bradburn, 1968) of marital happiness (Bagarozzi, Bagarozzi, Anderson & Pollane, 1984).

There seem to be many dependent variables used in these studies that are conceptually similar such as

marital adjustment (Markman, et al., 1988), marital satisfaction (Ridley & Bain, 1983), quality of interpersonal relationships (Ridley, Jorgensen, Morgan & Avery, 1982) and perceived heterosexual competence (Ridley, Avery, Dent & Harrell. 1981). One can even find the same researcher using different dependent variable labels in two studies that operationalize it with the same scale. For instance, Markman et al.(1983) use the premarital version of MAT (PMAT) to measure relationship satisfaction and Markman et al. (1988) use MAT to measure marital adjustment or satisfaction. This lack of consistency in dependent variables and their operationalization creates confusion for current researchers who try to interpret the findings of these marriage preparation evaluations.

Independent and Control Variables Used in Marriage Preparation Program Evaluation

Past researchers focused on whether the marriage preparation program had an impact on the participants, controlling for other mediating variables. From a review of the control variables employed in past marriage preparation evaluations, there appeared to be

some demographic variables that were included in all studies and others that were considered in only one or two studies. There was little consistency in which control variables were measured and analyzed.

First, it is important to know what variables were consistently included, consistently significant and consistently nonsignificant. The demographic variables found in most studies were sex , age, marital status (i.e. dating, engaged, previously married), duration of current relationship, level or years of education, and whether or not the couple was living together at time of the program (Markman & Floyd, 1980; Ridley, Avery, Dent & Harrell, 1981; Ridley, Avery, Harrell & Haynes-Clements, 1981; Markman Jamieson & Floyd, 1983; Huppert, 1984). These measures were used in most studies to describe what the population of participants was like. A limited number of studies stated that they controlled for age, or socioeconomic status. If more studies used these independent variables as control variables and not only as variables to describe the sample, their findings would be stronger and be open to fewer alternative interpretations. Also because the studies did not test for significance or explain that certain variables were nonsignificant, later

researchers did not know whether to keep studying those variables or remove them because they were not significant.

Some studies included independent/control variables that were unique to those studies. They were as follows: 1. ethnicity (Ridley, Jorgensen, Morgan & Avery, 1982); 2. socioeconomic status of parental family; 3. the difference in couples' mean family closeness between growing up and premarriage; 4. discrepancy in couples' ages; 5. couples' mean church attendance; 6. couples' mean family closeness while growing up; 7. discrepancy in couples incomes; 8. length of engagement; 9. history of family disruption ; 10. difference in couples' religion (Bader et al., 1980); 11. profession or occupation; 12. religion; 13. duration of previous marriage if applicable; 14. children per couple if applicable (Huppert, 1984); 15. whether or not formally engaged; 16. whether or not formally set your wedding date; 17. sexual activity; 18. usage and form of birth control; 19. plans if any for premarital counselling; 20. problem areas couples faci[illegible] at time of program (Markman, Jamieson & Floyd 1983); 21. size of home community (Ridley & Bain, 1983). In the research there were no discussions of

how these variables were controlled for or if these variables had any effect on the dependent variable. In addition, no information was given as to why these variables were measured and so current researchers are left to decide, based on their own judgement which ones should be included. It would be advisable for new studies to explain the researcher's rationale for measuring each demographic or control variable.

Sampling Issues

Sampling issues involve how the sample was obtained, sample size, whether or not there was a control or comparison group and the attrition rate during the study. All these pieces of information can affect the validity and reliability of any conclusions drawn from the program evaluations (Rossi, Wright & Anderson, 1983).

One of the gaps in the marriage preparation program evaluation research is the lack of a representative sample. First, in most studies couples volunteer for the program and are then placed in a waiting list control group or are placed directly into the treatment group. Couples in the control group are

placed on a waiting list and are allowed to take the marriage preparation program only after the pretest and posttest portions of the study are completed. It is common for couples in both the control group and treatment group to drop out before, during or after the program and thus not complete the study. For example, in the methodologically strong study by Markman, Floyd, Stanley & Storaasli (1988) sixty per cent of their treatment group was lost due to attrition. Even if the sample had been representative before couples dropped out of the sample, it was not representative after attrition.

A great variety was found in the sample sizes of previous studies. There are some studies that use quite small samples (less than 20 couples in treatment) (Markman & Floyd, 1980; Avery, Ridley, Leslie & Milholland, 1980). Other studies used much larger sample sizes (over 100 couples in the treatment group) (Boike, 1977). None of the studies with very large sample sizes were long term marriage preparation evaluations.

The more recent literature includes a control group or a comparison treatment group at posttest (e.g. Markman & Floyd, 1980; Bader et al., 1981; Bagarozzi,

Bagarozzi, Anderson & Pollane, 1984; Markman, Floyd, Stanley & Storaasli, 1988). Unfortunately, only one of these studies includes a control group at follow-up times (Bader et al., 1981). This is a result of the ethical issue of withholding treatment from couples when the program could help them. Therefore, there is a need for a strategy that allows for a control group for comparison at long term follow-up instead of comparing the long term treatment group results with the posttest results of the control group.

Relevant Marriage Enrichment Literature Review

Marriage Enrichment programs are also preventive programs to enhance marital quality, but they occur once the couple have been married. "The focus of almost all such marital programs is on the enhancement of communication skills, broadening and deepening emotional and/or sexual lives, and reinforcing and fostering marital strengths" (Gurman & Kniskern, 1977, p.3). The programs are generally for couples whose relationship is basically sound but who wish to make the relationship even more satisfying (Gurman & Kniskern, 1977). As the objective of reviewing the

marriage enrichment literature is to supplement and parallel the few long term marriage preparation evaluations, this review will only discuss those studies that include a long term follow-up.

Gurman & Kniskern (1977) reviewed the marriage enrichment research. They included four follow-up studies in their review (Burns, 1972; Nadeau, 1971; Swicegood, 1974; and Wieman, 1973). Three of the four studies showed a decline or no maintenance of a positive effect on their dependent measure. However, the follow-up time was short (e.g. 10 days, 10 weeks), or not reported in these studies.

Hedlund (1980) examined, in his master's thesis, the long term effect of the Edmonton Marriage Encounter program for participants from 1973-1979. Hedlund focused on the effects of Marriage Encounter on "... communication characteristics, satisfaction with areas of communication, and beliefs, attitudes and values" (Hedlund, 1980, p.88). Hedlund concludes from the results that "respondents perceive their involvement in Marriage Encounter as a significant factor in relationship change" (Hedlund, 1980, p.92). However, the study was retrospective and did not include any control or comparison group.

Adam & Gingras (1982) used a pretest-posttest procedure with a two month follow-up and one year follow-up of a treatment group and a waiting list control group. The significant gains in marital communication and adjustment, and level of problem solving shown by the enrichment treatment group as compared with the control group were maintained from posttest to the one year follow-up.

Others have not found short term positive effects of the enrichment program were maintained at a follow-up. For example, when Joanning (1982) did an 18-20 week follow-up on the Couple Communication program, the couples were found to return to their pretest level of marital adjustment. Zimpfer's (1988) review of recent enrichment research lists twelve enrichment research studies, seven of which included a follow-up of some type (Adams & Gingras, 1982; Joanning, 1982; Lester & Doherty, 1983; Strozier, 1981; Strickland, 1982; Wampler & Sprenkle, 1980; Wilson, 1980). Of these seven studies, five showed a continuing positive effect on some measure of relationship skills, marital adjustment or perceptual and personality measure at their follow-up time (Zimpfer, 1988).

Although not all the marriage enrichment follow-up studies continued to show a positive effect on measures of marital quality, many did. Given the similar goals and content areas of marriage enrichment and marriage preparation programs, these generally positive results suggest that there may be positive long term effects on marital quality of marriage preparation programs.

Summary of the Relevant Literature

In summary, it is clear that there is still a need for more evaluation of marriage preparation programs. Although some short and long term studies have concluded that various programs have a positive effect on relationship measures, there is still a need for high quality long term studies that occur more than six months after participants take a program. Current research should build on past research in the following manner:

1. Evaluate both the preventive and preparation goals of marriage preparation programs, but this does not necessarily have to occur in the same study;
2. Include longer term follow-up beyond six months after the program;

3. Evaluate more than two marriage preparation programs in the same study;
4. Use scales from previous studies to allow between study comparisons;
5. State clearly the conceptual and operational definitions of the dependent variables;
6. Include the independent or control variables that have been used by a number of experts in this field of study;
7. Justify inclusion of any independent or control variables that have not been significant or tested in past studies;
8. Include a strategy that allows for a control group for comparison at the time of long term follow-up.

How this Study Dealt with Some of the Research Issues and Gaps

The present researcher's two general objectives were: 1. to determine the long term effect of marriage preparation programs on marital quality; and 2. to examine whether the nature of the marriage preparation program experience, and the backgrounds of couples who participate influence the outcome variable of marital

quality. As a result, this researcher was helping fill the research gap of a minimal number of long term follow-up evaluations. Because the study was a follow-up that focuses on marital quality, the preventive goal is evaluated.

First-time married couples who participated in a program were compared with first-time married couples married the same length of time, six to forty-two months, who did not participate in a marriage preparation program. Thus participation in a marriage preparation program was the focus independent variable. The inclusion of couples who had not taken a marriage preparation program and had been married the same length of time meets the control group recommendation. Stipulating that the couples had been married six to forty-two months allows the evaluation to be longer term than some of the past research. It is unlikely that agencies would be able to track down their participants after more than a couple of years because this is a very mobile time in a young adult's life.

This study was also building on past research by measuring marital quality, a focus variable of previous research. Also, the scale chosen had been used in previous studies to operationalize marital quality so

the results of the study can be compared with past research, and the reliability and validity of the scale have been confirmed. An effort was made to define clearly all independent and dependent variables conceptually and operationally, and justify their inclusion in the study.

CHAPTER 3

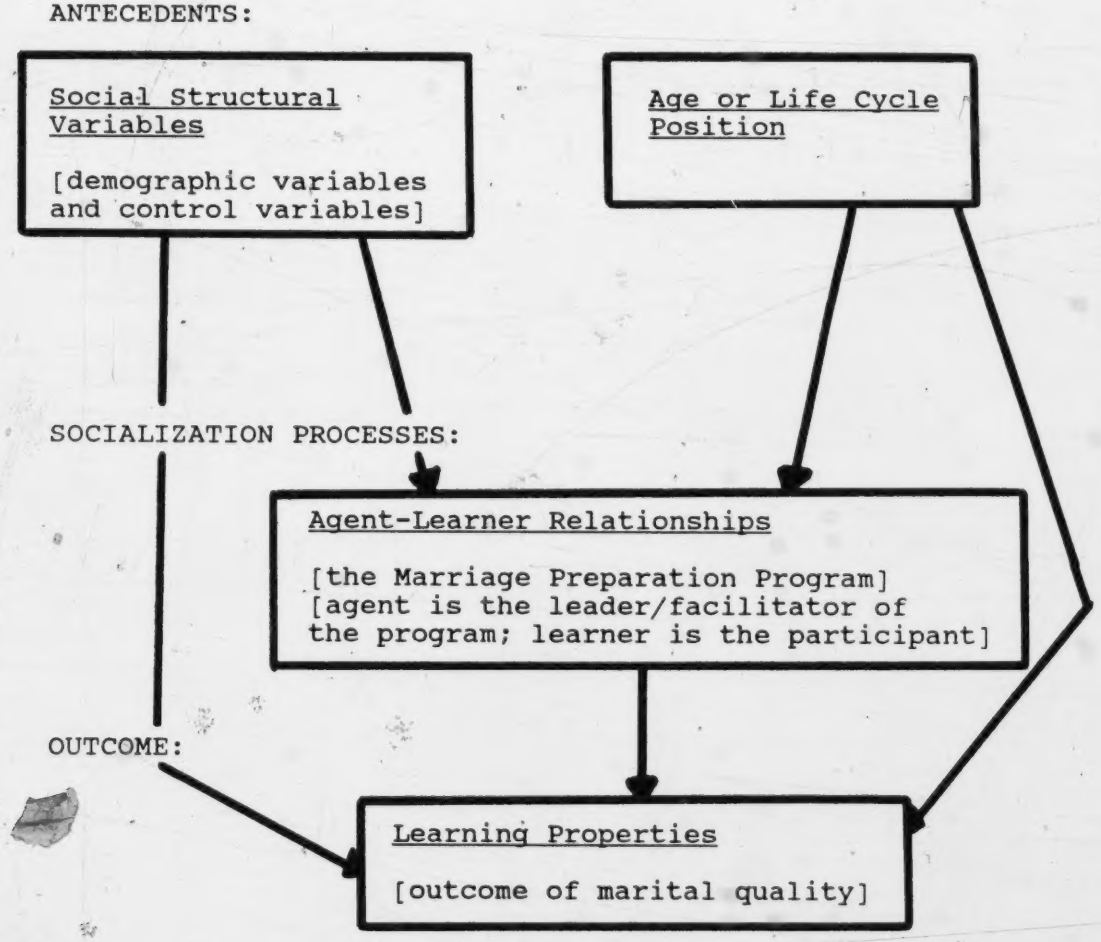
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Socialization theory (Brim, 1966) is the theoretical framework for the study. Socialization is "the process by which persons acquire the knowledge, skills and dispositions that make them more or less able members of their society" (Brim, 1966, p.3). In this study it is suggested that the individuals are being socialized to perform the role of husband or wife so they can be effective members of a marriage and have a high quality marriage.

Social Structural Variables and Age or Life Cycle Position Variables

The outcome of the socialization process depends on many variables. (see Figure One for a diagram of the theoretical model). The outcome depends directly and indirectly on the Antecedents which are the Social Structural Variables or Constraints, and Age or Life Cycle Position. Social structural variables are characteristics of the participants being socialized such as their education and income levels.

Figure 1. The theoretical model of socialization of participants in a marriage preparation program (based on and modified from the Moschis & Churchill, 1978, Conceptual Model of Consumer Socialization).



Agent-Learner Relationship

The outcome also depends directly on the Agent-Learner Relationship during the Socialization Process. The socialization agent is any person or organization "... directly involved in socialization because of frequency of contract with the individual, primacy to the individual, and control over rewards and punishments given to the individual" (Moschis, 1987, p.19).

The agent-learner relationship occurs in the context of the learning process(es) used in the program. "Learning processes refer to the ways in which the learner acquires specific values and behaviors from socialization agents while interacting with them" (Moschis, 1987, p.20). The three processes Moschis focuses on are modeling, reinforcement and social interaction. Modeling involves imitating the agent's behavior. Reinforcement is learning by reward of appropriate or punishment of inappropriate behavior. Social interaction is a less specific mechanism whereby an agent's characteristic social norms shape the learner's attitudes, values and behaviors through interactions with that agent.

According to Brim (1966), this agent-learner relationship is affected by the formality of the relationship, the power and support in the relationship and the group context of the person being socialized. Formality is defined as how formal the role of the learner is in the program and whether or not the agent represents a formal organization. The power and support in the relationship is concerned with the quality of the relationship between agent and learner. The group context of the person being socialized is determined by whether the person is socialized alone or in a group, and whether the socialization is serial or disjunctive. Serial socialization occurs when the participant "... has been preceded by others who have been through the same process and who can teach him[/her] about the setting" (Wheeler, 1966, p.60). Disjunctive socialization occurs when the individual does not have a predecessor's role to follow (Wheeler, 1966). A marriage preparation program could be classified partially as serial because others have taken the program before and others have married before, but the marriage preparation socialization is also disjunctive because the marital relationship of each particular couple is unique.

Also, when discussing the agent-learner relationship, one needs to understand the internal order of the organization. Wheeler mentions some aspects of the socialization agencies' internal order that are "... likely to influence socialization outcomes" (Wheeler, 1966, p.69). Description of the five internal order factors expected to affect the outcome of socialization follow.

The first factor is the organizational goal of the program. The organizational goals of the program are the overall objectives of the program. The second factor is the variability in the composition of the participant population which refers to the similarities or differences among the learners on various demographic variables. The third factor that affects the outcome is the interaction rate between learner and agent. Interaction rates include how often agent and learner interacted, whether or not the opportunity for interaction was easily available to the learner and whether or not the learner felt isolated from the agent.

The fourth factor, the setting and external environmental factor, refers to how removed the setting was from ongoing social contexts and how separated from

the external environment the learners were while participating in the program. There are benefits to separation from the external environment while in a program because this reduces potentially conflicting influences (Wheeler, 1966). But the greater the separation of the context of the program from the context in which the learners normally interact the "... less carry-over or generalization value from what is learned" (Wheeler, 1966, p.80). The final factor of internal organization that affects the outcome of socialization is social climate. The social climate refers to a "... subjective, attitudinal set rather than a condition effectively known by studying interaction patterns or personal characteristics" (Wheeler, 1966, p.82).

Outcome

The Outcome in Socialization theory is the Content or Criterion Behavior. "Content or criterion behavior refers to the learning properties (cognitions and behaviors) necessary for the performance of a given social role" (Moschis, 1987, p.22). The Outcome is directly and indirectly impacted by the Antecedent and

Socialization Process discussed earlier in this section.

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL MODELS AND SPECIFICATION OF VARIABLES

The general objectives of this study, as stated in the introduction, are:

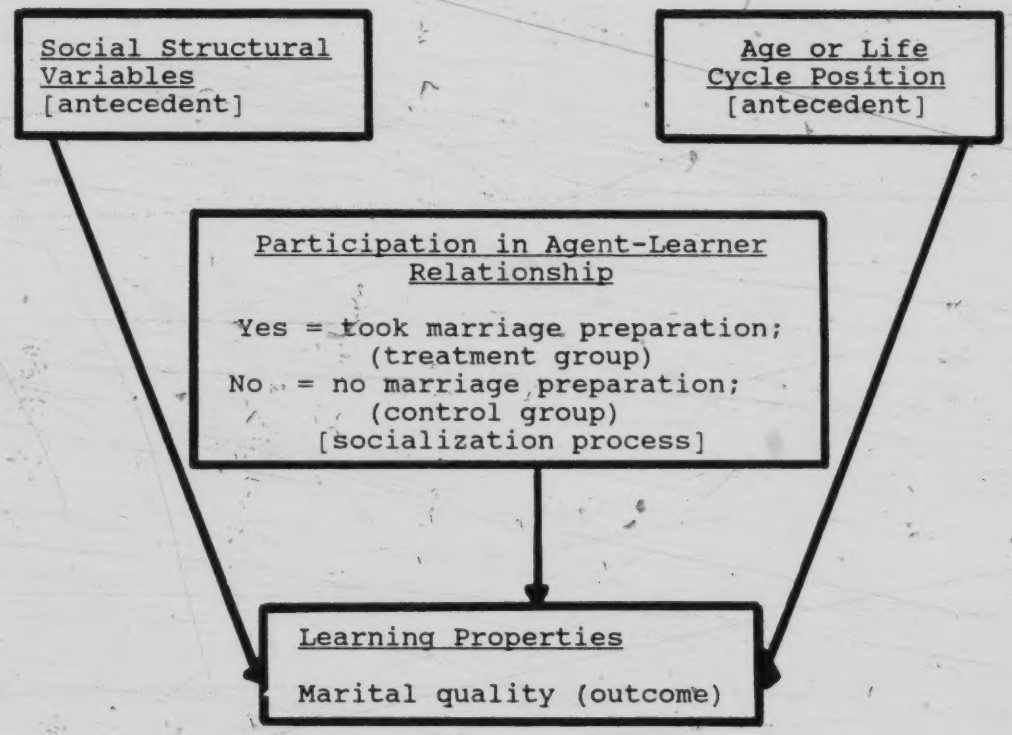
1. to determine the long term effect of marriage preparation programs on marital quality; and
2. to examine whether the nature of the marriage preparation program experience, and the backgrounds of couples who participate influence the outcome variable of marital quality directly and or indirectly.

In order to meet these objectives, two empirical models were derived from Socialization Theory. The proposed models are described and the variables included in each are specified and operationalized.

The Effect of Participation in a Marriage Preparation Program

Figure 2 represents the empirical model of the relationship between participation in a marriage preparation program and subsequent marital quality, conditioned on a set of control variables (the antecedents).

Figure 2. The empirical model of the relationship between participation in a marriage preparation program and subsequent marital quality, conditioned on a set of control variables (the antecedents).



Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this model is the outcome variable of marital quality. Conceptually, marital quality is defined using the Lewis & Spanier (1979) definition because it is a broader definition that encompasses all the terms, such as marital adjustment, marital satisfaction, marital happiness, etc, used in past research. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the dependent variable, marital quality, is conceptually defined as "... a subjective evaluation of a married couple's relationship" on "... a continuum ranging from high to low... "(Lewis & Spanier, 1979, p.269). "High marital quality, therefore, is associated with good judgement, adequate communication, a high level of marital happiness, integration and a high degree of satisfaction with the relationship" (Lewis & Spanier, 1979, p.273). Marital quality for the husband or wife will be measured by the total score on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976).

Independent Variables

The focus variable, for this part of the study, is whether the individual participated in a formalized marriage preparation program or not. It is therefore entered as a dummy variable where 1 = yes and 0 = no.

The control variables include a set of factors identified in the literature review of past marriage preparation program evaluations, and those suggested by the theoretical framework of socialization.

The researcher suggested that the following variables may have an effect on the socialization experience, but the empirical research did not suggest the direction of the effect or if the effect is always present. The control variables are the operationalizations of the Antecedents called Social Structural Variables and Age or Life Cycle Position.

Social Structural Variables

1. Gender is entered as 0 = male and 1 = female.
2. Duration of current relationship is measured by subtracting the data the relationship began from the date the individual completed the

questionnaire. The variable is entered at the ratio level in terms of the number of months.

3. Education is operationalized as the highest level of education completed. The variable is entered at the ordinal level of measurement in terms of categories with 0 = less than grade 10, 1 = grade 10 or 11, 2 = high school/ grade 12, 3 = some community college or tech school; no diploma, 4 = community college or technical diploma, 5 = some university; no degree, 6 = bachelor's or undergraduate degree, and 7 = masters degree or doctorate/Ph.D.
4. Income is operationalized as the total income of all members of their household for the past year before taxes and deductions. The variable is entered at the interval level of measurement as the midpoint of the interval data. For example $0-$4 999 is entered as $2 500, $5 000-$9 999 is entered as $7 500 and so on.
5. Socioeconomic status is operationalized as individuals' stated perception of their level of socioeconomic status. The variable is

entered as an ordinal measure with 1 = lower class, 2 = middle class, and 3 = upper class.

6. Participation in premarital counselling is entered as a dummy variable of 1 = yes and 0 = no (nominal level of measurement).
7. Discrepancy in couple's age is measured by subtracting the wife's age from the husband's age, and using the absolute value of this discrepancy.
8. Length of engagement is measured as how many months and years the individual was officially engaged (i.e. had told others). The variable is entered at the ratio level as the number of months of engagement.
9. Religious involvement is operationalized as how often the individual would be involved in an activity linked to their religious affiliation. The variable is entered as an ordinal level in terms of 0 = never, 1 = once a year, 2 = less than once a month but at least a couple of times a year, 3 = once a month, 4 = once every two weeks, 5 = once a week, and 6 = twice a week or more.
10. Employment is measured by a dummy variable

where yes the individual is employed = 1 and not employed = 0.

11. Marriage Enrichment program participation is a nominal level variable. If the person has participated in one, then a code of 1 is assigned, if not a code of 0 is assigned.
12. Participation in marital counselling is entered as a dummy variable of 1 = yes and 0 = no (nominal level of measurement).

Age or Life Cycle Position

1. Age is the individual's age in years at the time of the study.
2. Marital Status is controlled for because of the criteria for participation in the study which makes sure it is a first marriage for both partners. This variable is thus kept constant without the need for statistical analysis.
3. Living Arrangement is operationalized as whether or not the couple lived together before marriage. It is entered as a nominal level dummy variable where 1 = yes and 0 = no.

4. Length of Cohabitation was measured by asking participants who said they had lived together how long they had lived together. Those who had not cohabited were coded as 0 months, while the others were coded by the number of months of cohabitation.
5. Length of Marriage is measured by asking in what month and year they were married. The month and year of participation in the study is used to compute the number of years and months the individual has been married. This variable will be entered as a ratio level variable such as 1 = 1 year, 0 months, 2.5 = 2 years 6 months.
6. Presence of Children is measured by asking if the individual has or is expecting any children. A code of 1 is yes and a code of 0 is no.

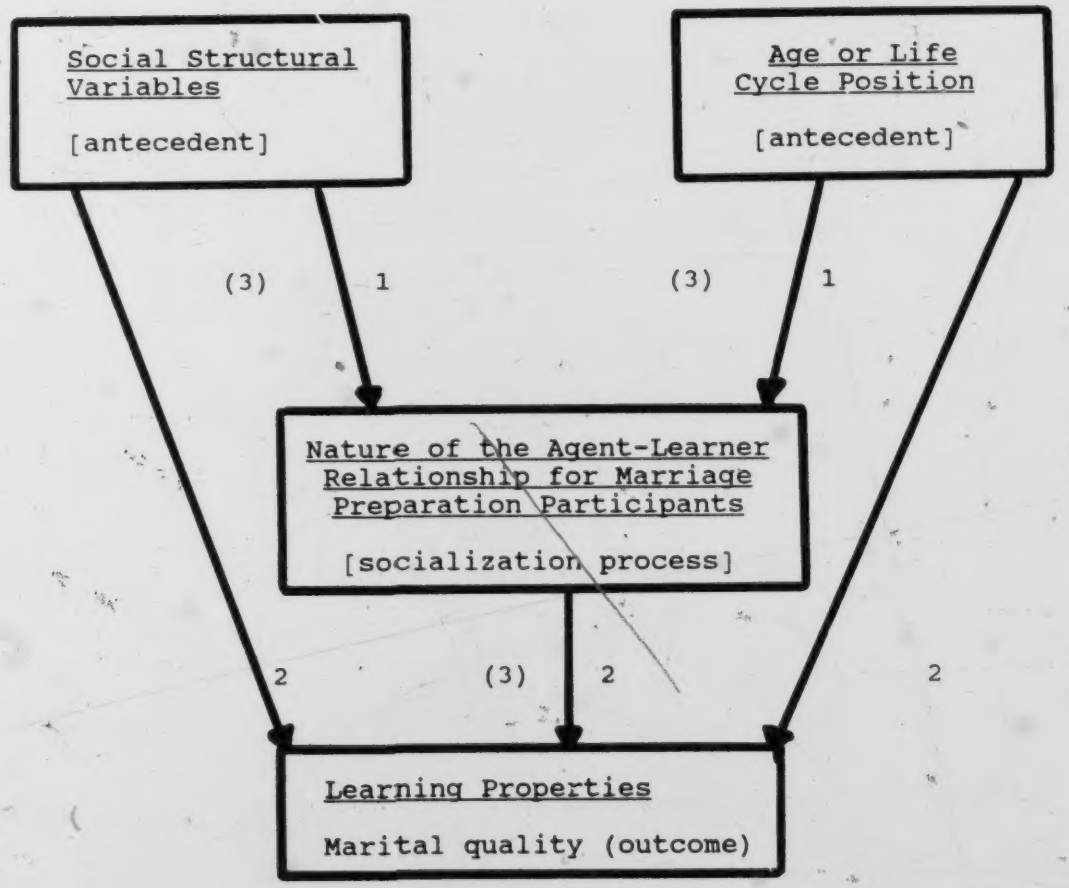
The Effect of the Nature of the Agent-Learner Relationship and the Background of the Learner on Marital Quality

Figure 3 represents the empirical model of the relationship between the backgrounds of the marriage preparation learners (antecedents), the nature of the agent-learner relationship (socialization process) and the subsequent marital quality (outcome). The model facilitates the examination of:

1. the direct effect, if any, of the social structural variables, and the age or life cycle position of the learner at the time of marriage preparation on the nature of the agent-learner relationship in the marriage preparation program;
2. the direct effect, if any, of the social structural variables at the time of marriage preparation, the age or life cycle position of the learner at the time of marriage preparation, and the nature of the agent-learner relationship on the later marital quality of the learner; and
3. the indirect effect, if any, of the social

structural variables and age or life cycle position on marital quality, via the nature of the agent-learner relationship.

Figure 3. The empirical model of the relationship between the backgrounds of the marriage preparation learners (antecedents), the nature of the agent-learner relationship and the subsequent marital quality (adapted from Moschis & Churchill, 1978, Conceptual Model of Consumer Socialization).



Direct Effect #1

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this model is the nature of the agent-learner relationship. It is measured by the nine variables described below. They will be grouped to form a scale of the nature of agent-learner relationships. Formality and program type are controlled for by the researcher's stipulation that only formalized programs that included the area of communications were included in the analysis.

1. Perceived power of leaders is operationalized by asking whether or not the leaders were viewed as authority figures or facilitators/ helpers or some other form of power. Facilitation is suggested by the researcher as a positive feature of the nature of the marriage preparation program experience. Authority figure was entered as 0, and facilitator/helper was entered as 1, with the other category being entered as missing data for the purposes of this analysis.
2. Group support is measured by the participant evaluating how supportive, on the whole, their

marriage preparation group was. A more supportive group would suggest a higher quality marriage preparation experience. An ordinal 5 point scale is used (0 = extremely unsupportive, 4 = extremely supportive).

3. Group context is operationalized in terms of whether the individual wanted to attend the marriage preparation program, whether or not participation was voluntary or required. Wanted to participate is an ordinal measure 1 = wanted to participate and 0 = did not want to participate.

Moschis (1987) mentioned the five internal order factors that are expected to effect the outcome of socialization. The first internal order factor, the overall goal of the marriage preparation program, is controlled for because they are known to be prevention and preparation. The other four internal order factors are operationalized below.

4. Effect of variability is measured by asking the participants if they thought the variability had a positive, negative or no effect. A negative effect is entered as a 0, a neutral effect as a 1, and a positive effect

as a 2.

5. The rate of interaction between learner and agent is operationalized with two variables. Interaction rate is measured by how much interaction the participant had with their leader(s). This ordinal variable is entered as 4 = a great deal of interaction to 0 = no interaction.

   Opportunity to interact is measured by how much opportunity they thought they had to interact with the leaders regardless of whether or not they acted on this opportunity. This ordinal variable is entered as 4 = a great deal of opportunity to interact with the leader(s) to 0 = no opportunity to interact with the leader(s).

6. Social climate of the marriage preparation experience is operationalized with three variables. Leadership satisfaction is measured using a 5 point ordinal scale with 0 = extremely unsatisfied to 4 = extremely satisfied. Program satisfaction is measured using a 5 point ordinal scale with 0 = extremely unsatisfied to 4 = extremely

satisfied. Program enjoyment is measured by how much the participant enjoyed the marriage preparation program on a 5 point ordinal scale with 0 = extremely unenjoyable 4 = extremely enjoyable.

Independent variables

The independent variables are the social structural variables and the age or life cycle position variables that were suggested in the empirical research and theoretical framework discussed in earlier chapters. All the social structural variables are the same as those included in the first empirical model (Figure 2), but the variables are measured retrospectively in terms of the answer at the time they were participating in a marriage preparation program. The variables for the age or life cycle position are the same, but asked in terms of the marriage preparation time frame. One exception is the removal of the length of marriage variable, because they are not married at the time of marriage preparation.

Social structural variables.

1. Gender is entered as 0 = male and 1 = female.
2. Duration of current relationship is calculated by subtracting the month and year of marriage preparation from the month and year the relationship began (i.e. considered themselves girlfriend-boyfriend). The variable is entered at the ratio level in terms of number of months.
3. Education is operationalized as the highest level of education completed at the time of marriage preparation. The variable is entered using the same categories as used for the model one.
4. Income is operationalized as the participant's own personal income for the past year before taxes and deductions, at the time of marriage preparation. The variable is entered at the interval level of measurement as the midpoint of the interval data.
5. Socioeconomic status is operationalized by asking the participant what they state was their level of socioeconomic status at the

time of marriage preparation. The variable is entered as an ordinal measure with 1 = lower class, 2 = middle class, and 3 = upper class.

6. Length of engagement is measured by how many months and years the individual had been officially engaged at the time of marriage preparation. The variable is entered at the ratio level in terms of the number of months of engagement.
7. Religious involvement is operationalized as how often the individual would be involved in an activity linked to their religious affiliation at the time of marriage preparation. The variable is entered using the same categories as used for the model one.
8. Employment is measured by a dummy variable where yes the individual is employed = 1 and not employed = 0.

Age or life cycle position.

1. Age is the individual's age in years at the time of marriage preparation which is entered

at a ratio level.

2. Marital Status is measured in terms of what their marital status was at the time of marriage preparation (1 = officially engaged, 2 = unofficially engaged, 3 = dating). The control of first marriage made sure that none of the participants were previously married at the time of the marriage preparation.
3. Living Arrangement is operationalized as whether or not the couple were living together at the time of the marriage preparation. It is entered as a nominal level dummy variable where 1 = yes and 0 = no.
4. Presence of Children is measured by asking if the individual had or was expecting any children at the time of marriage preparation. A code of 1 is yes and a code of 0 is no.

Direct Effect #2

Dependent variable

The dependent variable in this part of the model is the level of marital quality of the participant as

measured by the total score on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976).

Independent variables

The independent variables are the social structural variables, the age or life cycle position, and the nature of the agent-learner relationship variables that were suggested in the empirical research and theoretical framework discussed in earlier chapters. All the social structural variables are the same as those included in the first empirical model (Figure 2), but the variables are measured retrospectively in terms of the answer at the time they were participating in a marriage preparation program. The variables for the age or life cycle position are the same, but asked in terms of the marriage preparation time frame. Two exceptions are the removal of the length of marriage variable, because the participants are not married at the time of marriage preparation and the length of cohabitation variable. See direct effect #1 for a listing of how the social structural, age or life cycle position, and nature of

the agent-learner relationship variables have been operationally defined.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY

The multi-method approach, in which participants are obtained in a number of different ways, was chosen for two important reasons. First, in order to obtain the proposed sample size of at least fifty couples for both the treatment and control groups, many ways of acquiring volunteers were necessary. Second, variability in such characteristics as education, income, religious involvement, number of months engaged, and specific programs in which they participated was desired. A variety of methods should have produced a wider variability in these characteristics. If, for example, the researcher had used only church groups to obtain participants, then the level of religious involvement would become a confounding variable in any conclusions drawn. Even with the multi-method approach, the age variability will be limited. The researcher expected a majority of the participants to be between 18 and 35 years of age because the focus was first time marrieds only.

A self-administered questionnaire was used because it was more affordable and possible to obtain a large

sample size with self-administration. Also, it was hoped that by completing separate questionnaires, individuals could be more honest about what their married relationship was like. If couples were in a joint interview, one or both members of the couple may have not felt comfortable in explaining about the quality of their marital relationship. To also reduce cost, some questionnaires were administered by telephone interview (20 of the 292 telephone administered). Studies have shown consistent results between the two methods (Rossi, Wright & Anderson, 1983).

All couples had the opportunity to request a summary of the results of the study. The list of names and addresses to whom summaries were being sent were kept separately from the questionnaires.

Subjects

One hundred, first-time legally married couples who had been married at least six months, but no more than forty-two months, and who participated in a marriage preparation program, were recruited to form the treatment group. Of these one hundred men and one

hundred women in the marriage preparation program treatment group, 71 males and 73 females had completed their questionnaires fully (i.e. there were no missing values).

One hundred first-time legally married couples who had been married at least six months, but no more than forty-two months, and who did not participate in a marriage preparation program were recruited to form the comparison control group. Of these one hundred men and one hundred women in the control group, 70 males and 78 females had completed their questionnaires fully (i.e. there were no missing values).

At the time of volunteering to participate in the "Early Married Life Survey" couples were screened to make sure it was a first marriage for both spouses and that they had been married the required number of years. The study determined whether participants had had any marital counselling, but these participants were not separated into a separate comparison group in the recruitment of subjects. Marital counselling was included as a variable so that the researcher could control for the effect it might be having on the individuals' marital quality.

The Questionnaire

A questionnaire was administered that included measures of the dependent variable, marital quality; the focus independent variable, whether or not they took a marriage preparation program; and the control variables. See Appendix 1 for a copy of the questionnaire, Appendix 2 for a copy of the letter of permission to include the Dyadic Adjustment Scale in the questionnaire, Appendix 3 for the consent form for the Early Married Life Survey, and Appendix 4 for the ethical approval for the study.

Dyadic Adjustment Scale

The marital quality scale used in this study has been used in past program evaluation research and in past general marital relations research. Marital quality is operationally defined using the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)[4] (Spanier, 1976). This scale includes some of the questions from other measures of marital quality, such as Locke & Wallace (1959) Marital

[4] The Dyadic Adjustment Scale is available in Canada. The address is: Multi Health Systems, 95 Thorncliffe Park Drive, Suite 100, Toronto, Ontario M4H 1L7.

Adjustment Test and Terman's (1938) Marital Happiness Index. The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) was developed by first pooling the approximately 300 items ever used in past measurements of marital adjustment or a related concept. These items then went through a thirteen step procedure which resulted in the present 32 item scale called the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS).

Validity and reliability information about the DAS is also available, and therefore the results of this study can be interpreted taking these values into account. Spanier explains that the scale "... works best as a global measure. Users must recognize that there is a high degree of correlation among the four factors..." (1988, p.93) which are Dyadic Consensus, Dyadic Satisfaction, Dyadic Cohesion and Affectional Expression. He considers "... the strength of the scale to be in its overall utility, its ability to reliably and validly give a general assessment of a relationship with a paper-and-pencil test that can be administered in no more than a few minutes" (Spanier, 1988, p.93).

Validity of Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Content validity refers to the degree to which one has representatively sampled from the domain of meaning that is being studied. The content validity of the items suggested for the DAS were evaluated by three judges. The items were judged on whether they were considered: 1."... relevant measures of dyadic adjustment for contemporary relationships" (Spanier, 1976, p.22); 2. consistent with the definitions of adjustment and related concepts (satisfaction, cohesion and consensus); and 3. "... carefully worded with appropriate fixed choice responses" (Spanier, 1976, p.23). Also, during the formation of the scale from the original two hundred items, virtually all of the 32 items chosen were rated by the respondents as very important in categorizing the marriage which also ensures that the items selected for the DAS have content validity.

Criterion-related validity is a measure of whether the scale correlates with observable criterion behaviors. The specific type of criterion-related validity used by Spanier (1976) was concurrent validity which is assessed by a correlation between the scale

and the criterion variable at the same point in time. The criterion variable was marital status (married or divorced). "For each item, the divorced sample differed significantly from the married sample ($p<.001$) using a t-test for assessing differences between sample means" (Spanier, 1976, p.23). In addition, the mean total scale scores of married ($M = 114.8$) and divorced ($M = 70.7$) were significantly different at the $p = .001$ level (Spanier, 1976).

Construct validity refers to the degree to which a test measures the theoretical construct or trait it purports to measure (see Rossi & Wright, 1983 regarding types of validity). Spanier (1976) included two ways of checking construct validity. He correlated his scale with previous scales that were measuring the same construct. The correlation between the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (1959) and the DAS was .86 for married respondents and .88 for divorced respondents ($p<.001$). Spanier also used factor analysis to further establish the scale's construct validity. Four factors resulted from the factor analysis (dyadic consensus, dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion and affectional expression), and three of them matched the ones that had been hypothesized (i.e. satisfaction, cohesion,

consensus). Spanier's (1976) factor structure was confirmed by an independent factor analysis on a small Australian sample (Antill & Cotton, 1982). Because a consistent, replicable and interpretable pattern of factors is apparent in the DAS, "... it is possible to conclude that there is underlying validity for the constructs measured by the scale" (Spanier, 1989, p. 34).

Reliability of Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Reliability of a measure is the "... consistency of scores obtained by the same persons when reexamined with the same test on different occasions, or with different sets of equivalent items, or under variable examining conditions" (Anastasi, 1982, p.102). Spanier (1976) reported a total scale Chronbach's Alpha coefficient of internal consistency of .96.

The temporal stability of the DAS over relatively long time intervals has been supported in two studies. Stein, Girodo & Ditzenroth (1982) found an eleven week test-retest correlation for the total DAS of .96; for Dyadic Consensus of .98; for Dyadic Satisfaction of .92; for Affectional Expression of .78 and for Dyadic Cohesion of .88. Belsky, Spanier & Rovine (1983) found

a twelve month test-retest reliability for the total DAS for wives of .82 and for husbands of .69.

Research Procedure

Before the main study occurred, a pilot study using six couples (three who took a marriage preparation program and three who did not) was carried out. The pilot study's main purpose was to find any ambiguous or unclear instructions or questions in the demographic questionnaire. These couples were debriefed by the researcher in order to obtain verbal feedback on how the methodology of the study could be improved.

Procedures For Recruiting Participants

Treatment Group Only Procedure

Method one

Two agencies (Family Life Education Council and Pastoral Institute) that run marriage preparation courses in the city of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada agreed to give the researcher lists of potential participants

with their addresses and phone numbers at the time of marriage preparation. Couples married at least six months but no more than forty-two months were included in the sample to be contacted. The researcher attempted to contact names from the list. Many addresses and phone numbers were incorrect and could not be updated by looking for the name in the city's present phone book. Once the researcher had contacted the couple and they had agreed to participate the questionnaire was either mailed out or completed in a telephone interview, whichever method the couple preferred.

Treatment Group and Comparison Control Group Procedures

Method two

Ministers from Lutheran, Baptist, and United Church of Canada churches offered lists of couples who were contacted. Those couples who volunteered and had participated in marriage preparation were included in the treatment group. Those couples who volunteered and had not participated in marriage preparation were included in the comparison control group.

Method three

The mall intercept method was used at Heritage Mall for eight hours on a Saturday. This mall was chosen because it is situated where a large population of young adults and young families live. Any couples or individuals who had been married at least six months but under forty-two months, and for whom it was a first marriage for both partners, were asked to complete the questionnaire at the time they were asked to participate. If only one member of the couple was present, a questionnaire and postage paid, self-addressed return envelope was given to the participant to take home to their husband and wife. Those couples who volunteered in this way and had participated in marriage preparation were included in the treatment group. Those couples who volunteered in this way and had not participated in marriage preparation were included in the comparison control group.

Method four

The fourth method used to obtain participants was the snowball technique where participants or people the

researcher had contact with offered the names, addresses and telephone numbers of potential participants. These couples were then contacted and asked to volunteer to participate. Those who agreed to participate were then mailed a set of questionnaires or they completed the questionnaires in a telephone interview.

Method five

The final method proposed for this follow-up evaluation was to advertise in low cost places. Posters were placed in hospitals, churches, schools, grocery stores and other unknown places where helping people chose to place them. An ad was also placed for free in the Neighbors section of the Edmonton Journal, in the April McDonald's Restaurant community calendar that is placed on the serving trays, in the Sherwood Park News and one school newsletter. The advertisements included the screening criteria and a telephone number that had a message machine attached to it to record the calls. The researcher then called and talked to the potential participants. If at this time the couple agreed to participate a set of

questionnaires were mailed out or the questionnaires were completed through telephone interviews.

Number of participants obtained by various method

Method one, two and four are all variations of the snowball technique with the first two methods making use of lists of names to contact and the other making use of other participants for potential volunteers for the study. In total 260 of the 292 participants were obtained by one of these three snowball techniques. Method three, the mall intercept method, resulted in 11 of the 292 participants. And the remaining 21 participants were obtained through method five which was the use of various advertisements.

Procedure for Administering Questionnaires

In the methods that required packages to be mailed out or taken home to a spouse, each individual was instructed to complete a questionnaire on their own without discussing their answers ahead of time with their partner. Along with the two questionnaires (one for the wife and one for the husband), the packages contained a cover letter, a list of referral agencies

for marital and family concerns, and a return addressed, postage paid envelope. The participants who had not returned their questionnaires to the researcher within three weeks were contacted by telephone to determine if they were still willing to participate. This call-back technique was used to produce a high response rate among couples who had already agreed to participate.

In the mall intercept method, the participants met the researcher or one of her assistants face-to-face and were handed the questionnaires. Telephone interviewing, an alternative to mailing out the questionnaire, was used where possible to cut down on mailing costs and for efficient data collection. A tape recorded verbal consent was required before the questionnaire was administered. The verbal consent replaced the written consent form. The questions was read out exactly as they appeared on the questionnaire with no interpretations or elaborations by the interviewer.

Scale Construction for the Nature of the Agent-Learner Relationship

In order to measure the Nature of the Agent-Learner Relationship and use it as a dependent variable in step one of the testing of Model Two, a scale of some of the nature variables was developed. In the end, only the subjective measures of the marriage preparation experience were used in the scale development. There was too much missing data on objective questions such as the exact name of the agency who sponsored the marriage preparation, and the number of couples who attended their program.

A factor analysis was run on: 1. the perceived power of the leader; 2. the support of the marriage preparation group; 3. the group context in terms of wanting to participate versus having to participate; 4. the effect of variability in group composition; 5. the rate of interaction between the agent and learner; 6. the opportunity for interaction between the agent and learner; 7. the satisfaction with the leadership; 8. the satisfaction with the program; and 9. the perceived enjoyment of the program. The rotation used was varimax and the sample size was 141 individuals. The

analysis was not divided by gender because the researcher did not find any gender differences in Model One (see results in Chapter 6).

Two factors were found, rather than just one that measures Nature. Factor one includes leadership satisfaction, program satisfaction and program enjoyment (see Table 17. in Appendix 5). This factor has been labeled social climate, because this was the theoretical basis upon which these variables were originally included in the questionnaire. Factor two includes the rate of interaction between the agent and learner, and the opportunity for interaction between the agent and learner (see Table 16 in Appendix 5). As a result of the recurrent theme of interaction in factor two, it has been labeled Level of Program Interaction. The other four variables did not form consistent factors, so they were dropped at this stage from use in Model Two.

The two factors appear to have high content validity because of the themes of the variables that factored together. The reliability coefficients for the Social Climate and Program Interaction subscales are reported in Table 1. The inter-item correlation coefficients had moderately high correlations ranging

from 0.66973 to 0.80903. The item-total correlation coefficients range had higher correlations ranging from 0.89107 to 0.94374. All these correlation coefficients are of the size that would be expected for a reliable scale.

Table 1. The inter-item correlation coefficients and the item-total correlation coefficients for the Social Climate factor and the Program Interaction factor.

Variable Correlated	Correlation coefficient	p-value
Leadership satisfaction and Program satisfaction	0.77567	0.0001
Leadership satisfaction and Program enjoyment	0.67086	0.0001
Program satisfaction and Program enjoyment	0.80903	0.0001
Leadership satisfaction and Social Climate factor	0.89753	0.0001
Program satisfaction and Social Climate factor	0.94374	0.0001
Program enjoyment and Social Climate factor	0.89912	0.0001
Interaction rate and Opportunity for interaction	0.66973	0.0001
Interaction rate and Program Interaction factor	0.93382	0.0001
Opportunity for interaction and Program Interaction factor	0.89107	0.0001

Limitations of the Study

In using a sample of couples who took a marriage preparation program and a sample of couples who did not, one needed to show that other characteristics of the treatment and control groups were similar or had the same variability or otherwise control for them. This similarity was necessary so that any differences in marital quality could be attributed to the skills facilitated in the program and not to other things such as maturation. If members of the control group differed from those in the treatment group on demographic variables such as income, education, age or religious affiliation, then we could not be sure that any observed differences in the data were a result of the program and not a result of a difference in demographics.

Because this study included some retrospective questions, there were concerns about how accurate the answers to these questions were. The past may seem better or worse than it was because of the situation the person is in now.

Finally because the sample was a nonprobability quota sample, the results cannot be directly generalized beyond the participants in the study.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS

Sample Demographics

The researcher used a multi-method approach in the hope of gaining a wide variability in her sample of treatment and control group participants. The percentages for the categorical variables show similar sample profiles for the marriage preparation treatment group and the no marriage preparation control group on the number of men and women (Table 2.), the highest level of education completed (Table 3.), the individual's perceived socioeconomic status (Table 4.), the individual's religious affiliation (Table 5.), the number of individuals who lived together before they married (Table 6.), the number of individuals who had or were expecting a child (Table 7.), the number of individuals employed (Table 8.), the number of individuals who had participated in marital counseling (Table 9.) and the number of individuals who had participated in marriage enrichment (Table 10.).

Table 2. The frequencies for the categorical variable of gender in Model One.

	Marriage Preparation		No Marriage Preparation	
Gender	Freq	% Freq	Freq	% Freq
Male (0)	71	49.3	70	47.3
Female (1)	73	50.7	78	52.7

Table 3. The frequencies for the categorical variable of the highest level of education the participant had completed in Model One.

	Marriage Preparation		No Marriage Preparation	
Education	Freq	% Freq	Freq	% Freq
<grade 10 (0)	0	0.0	2	1.4
Grade 10/11 (1)	4	2.8	7	4.7
High School (2)	22	15.3	35	23.6
Some Community College/Tech School; no diploma (3)	13	9.0	16	10.8
Community College or Technical diploma (4)	40	27.8	24	16.2
Some University no degree (5)	11	7.6	11	7.4
Bachelor's degree (6)	53	36.8	46	31.1
Master's/PhD (7)	1	0.7	7	4.7

Table 4. The frequencies for the categorical variable of present perceived socioeconomic status (SES).

	Marriage Preparation		No Marriage Preparation	
SES	Freq	% Freq	Freq	% Freq
Lower Class (0)	15	10.4	3	2.0
Middle Class (1)	129	89.6	145	98.0
Upper Class (2)	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 5. The frequencies for the categorical variable of present religious affiliation.

Religious Affiliation	Marriage Preparation Freq	% Freq	No Marriage Preparation Freq	% Freq
Anglican (0)	17	11.8	8	5.4
Baptist (1)	2	1.4	9	6.1
Greek Orthodox (2)	1	0.7	4	2.7
Jewish (3)	0	0.0	0	0.0
Lutheran (4)	25	17.4	30	20.3
Mennonite (5)	0	0.0	0	0.0
Latter Day Saints (6)	0	0.0	6	4.1
Pentecostal (7)	4	2.8	5	3.4
Presbyterian (8)	0	0.0	1	0.7
Roman Catholic (9)	27	18.8	7	4.7
Ukrainian Cath. (10)	3	2.1	0	0.0
United Church (11)	40	27.8	14	9.5
Protestant - Unspec.	6	4.2	6	4.1
Christian - Unspec.	0	0.0	11	7.4
Islam (14)	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other Eastern Relig.	0	0.0	0	0.0
Jehovah's Witnesses	0	0.0	0	0.0
Reformed (17)	0	0.0	0	0.0
Salvation Army (18)	0	0.0	0	0.0
Church of God (19)	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other Eastern Orthodox	0	0.0	2	1.4
Seventh Day Adventist	0	0.0	0	0.0
Alliance (24)	0	0.0	22	14.9
Other (22)	4	2.8	5	3.4
NO religious affil. (23)	15	10.4	18	12.2

Table 6. The frequencies for the categorical variable of whether the individual and their future spouse lived together before marrying.

	Marriage Preparation		No Marriage Preparation	
Lived Together	Freq	% Freq	Freq	% Freq
No (0)	76	52.8	85	57.4
Yes (1)	68	47.2	63	42.6

Table 7. The frequencies for the categorical variable of whether or not the participant has children or is expecting a child at the time of completing the questionnaire.

	Marriage Preparation		No Marriage Preparation	
Have/Expecting Children	Freq	% Freq	Freq	% Freq
No (0)	106	73.6	101	68.2
Yes (1)	38	26.4	47	31.8

Table 8. The frequencies for the categorical variable of whether or not the participant is employed at the time of completing the questionnaire.

	Marriage Preparation		No Marriage Preparation	
Employed	Freq	% Freq	Freq	% Freq
No (0)	21	14.6	20	13.5
Yes (1)	123	85.4	128	86.5

Table 9. The frequencies for the categorical variable of whether the individual and their spouse have participated in any marital counseling.

	Marriage Preparation		No Marriage Preparation	
Marital Counseling	Freq	% Freq	Freq	% Freq
No (0)	133	92.4	140	94.6
Yes (1)	11	7.6	8	5.4

Table 10. The frequencies for the categorical variable of whether the individual and their spouse have participated in any marriage enrichment programs.

	Marriage Preparation		No Marriage Preparation	
Marriage Enrichment	Freq	% Freq	Freq	% Freq
No (0)	141	97.9	137	92.6
Yes (1)	3	2.1	11	7.4

There were differences in the number of individuals who had participated in premarital counseling. This premarital counseling often occurred with the clergy who was marrying the couple, and did not just involve meeting with the clergy to discuss the wedding plans. The counselling typically involved the individual and their fiance(e), and the clergy. The no marriage preparation control group had 21.6% more people taking premarital counseling than the marriage preparation treatment group did (see Table 11.).

Table 11. The frequencies for the categorical variable of whether the individual and their future spouse participated in any premarital counselling.

	Marriage Preparation		No Marriage Preparation	
Premarital Counseling	Freq	% Freq	Freq	% Freq
No (0)	109	75.7	80	54.1
Yes (1)	35	24.3	68	45.9

The sample profiles for the marriage preparation treatment group and the no marriage preparation control groups were also similar on the continuous variables' means and standard deviations. The marriage preparation group had, on average, been in their relationship with their spouse for 5.25 years (from girlfriend/boyfriend until the time of the questionnaire), compared with a $\underline{M}$ = 4.85 years for the control group. The income of the participants in both groups was similar with a $\underline{M}$ = $48 510 for the marriage preparation group and a $\underline{M}$ = $49 320 for the control group. The mean age of individuals in the marriage preparation group was 25.88 years and 26.84 for those in the control group. The mean differences in age between the husband and wife were 2.53 years for individuals in the marriage preparation group and 3.03

years for those in the control group. The mean length of engagement was 1.00 years for individuals in the marriage preparation group and 0.85 years for those in the control group. The mean length of marriage was 1.88 years for individuals in the marriage preparation group and 1.82 years for those in the control group. Individuals in the marriage preparation group had lived together on average 7.46 months and those in the control group on average 7.32 months. Individuals in the marriage preparation group had a mean religious involvement of 1.99 and those in the control group had a mean of 2.86.

Marital quality was measured by the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (Spanier, 1976). The mean marital quality score for individuals in the marriage preparation group was 116.77 with a range from 83 to 145. The mean marital quality score for individuals in the control group was 117.88 with a range from 56 to 139. According to the married norms for the DAS scale, a standardized T-score of $\leq$ 25 (mean of 50, standard deviation of 10) is considered clinically significant for a group of married individuals, not in a clinical setting. Clinically significant means the individual

is in extreme marital distress. Only the no marriage preparation group had one score well below this value.

Table 12. The means and standard deviations for the continuous variables included in Model One.

	Marriage Preparation (N=144)		No Marriage Preparation (N=148)	
Variable	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
Duration of total relationship in years	5.25	1.71	4.85	2.97
Income (in $1000)	48.51	21.27	49.32	22.78
Age	25.88	3.04	26.84	4.94
Difference in age in years	2.53	2.45	3.03	2.65
Length of engagement in years	1.00	0.54	0.85	0.87
Length of marriage in years	1.88	0.54	1.82	0.60
Number of months lived together	7.46	11.87	7.32	13.46
Religious Involvement	1.99	1.81	2.86	2.43
Marital quality	116.77	12.50	117.88	12.31

The Effect of Participation in a Marriage Preparation Program: Testing Model One

Model One is the operationalization of Figure 2. The tested model includes as social structural variables gender, duration of current relationship, education, income, perceived socioeconomic status, participation in premarital counseling, discrepancy in couple's age, length of engagement, occupation, religious affiliation, religious involvement, employment, participation in marriage enrichment programs and participation in marital counseling. The age or life cycle position variables are age, marital status (controlled for with all first time marriages), whether the couple lived together before marriage, length of cohabitation (if lived together), length of marriage and presence of children.

The focus independent variable is the presence or absence of the agent-learner relationship, that is whether or not the individual participated in a marriage preparation program. The dependent variable is the individual's marital quality score on the DAS. Figure 4 outlines the model tested using regression analysis. Religious affiliation was not tested in the

regression analysis because it was a categorical variable that could not be easily transformed into a dummy variable. The researcher decided that religious involvement would offer an indicator of the impact of a person's religious background, and so removing religious affiliation would not effect the results. Occupation also was not included in the regression analysis because it was decided that perceived socioeconomic status and income would be better indicators of the individual's overall socioeconomic status. A stepwise regression procedure using the model in Figure 4 was carried out (entry level = 0.05).

Figure 4. The tested model of the relationship between participation in a marriage preparation program and subsequent marital quality, conditioned on a set of 17 control variables.

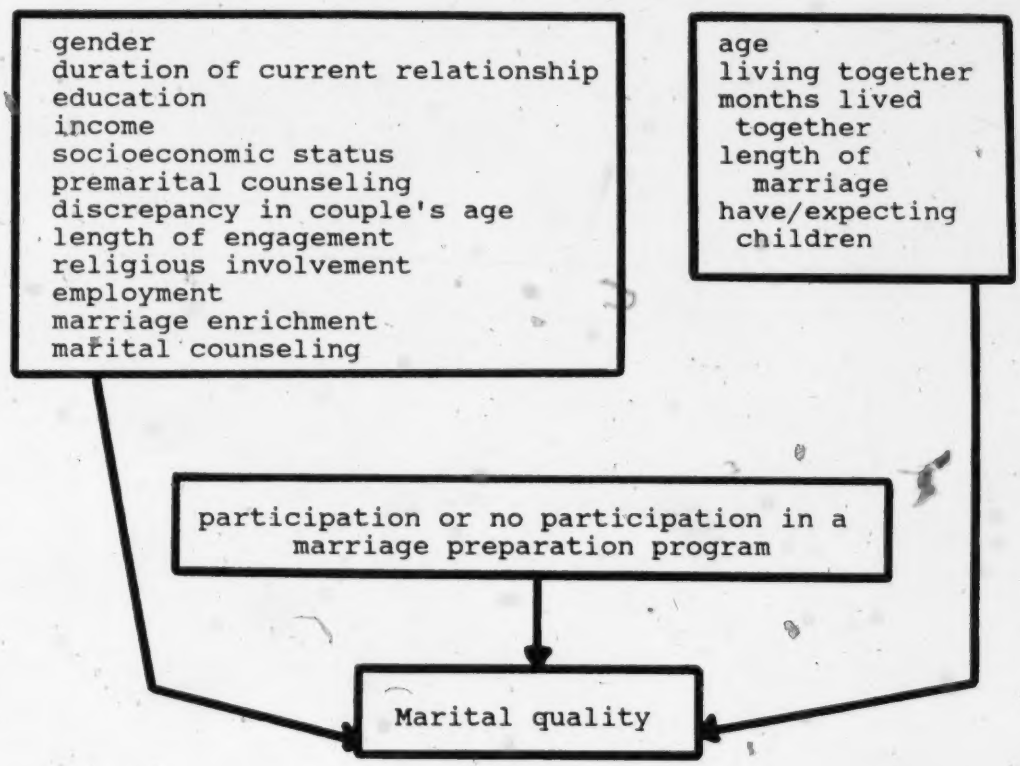


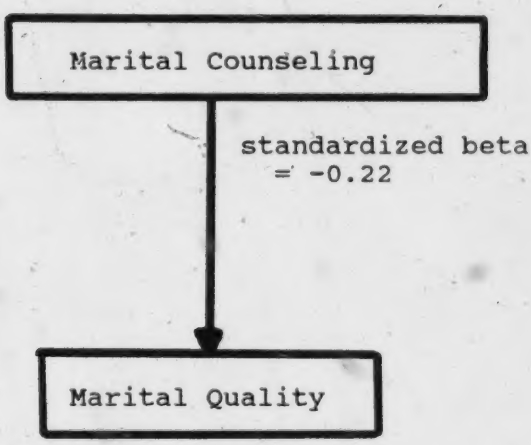
Figure 5 outlines the reduced model that was suggested by the stepwise regression analysis, using standardized beta coefficients. Marital counseling was the only variable that had a significant impact on the dependent variable of marital quality at a $p < 0.05$. A participant in the study who had participated in marital counseling would have a lower marital quality score by 0.22, when all other variables were controlled. Table 13. outlines the results of the regression analysis. The marital counseling variable explains 5.00% of the variance in marital quality.

Table 13. Results of the regression of social structural, and age or life cycle variables against the dependent variable of marital quality.[a]

Variable	Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient	T-value
Constant	118.06	0.00	161.17
Marital Counseling	-11.22	-0.22	-3.91

[a] F-value = 15.266 ($p < 0.001$) (df = 290)
[a] $R^2 = 0.0500$
[a] Adj. $R^2 = 0.0467$

Figure 5. The reduced model of the relationship between participation in a marriage preparation program and subsequent marital quality.



The Effect of the Nature of the Agent-Learner Relationship and the Background of the Learner on Marital Quality: Testing Model Two

Step One

Model Two is the operationalization of Figure 3. In step one, the tested model includes as social structural variables gender, duration of current relationship, education, income, perceived socioeconomic status, length of engagement, occupation, religious affiliation, and religious involvement, employment. The age or life cycle position variables are age, marital status (controlled for with engaged to marry for the first time), whether the couple lived together before marriage, and presence of children. All of these are entered as independent variables in the stepwise regression procedure (entry level = 0.05), except for occupation and discrepancy in age. Occupation and religious affiliation were not used as final variables in Model One so they were not used here. Discrepancy in age had no effect in Model One, so it was removed here because its value does not change over time.

Two separate factors replaced the Nature of the Agent-Learner Relationship variable in Model Two. Therefore, two separate stepwise regressions were run, one with the Social Climate factor as the dependent variable and the other with the Program Interaction factor as the dependent variable. Figure 6. is a representation of the tested model for both Social Climate and Program Interaction factors.

Figure 6. The tested model of the relationship between the backgrounds of the marriage preparation learners (antecedents) and the nature of the agent-learner relationship.

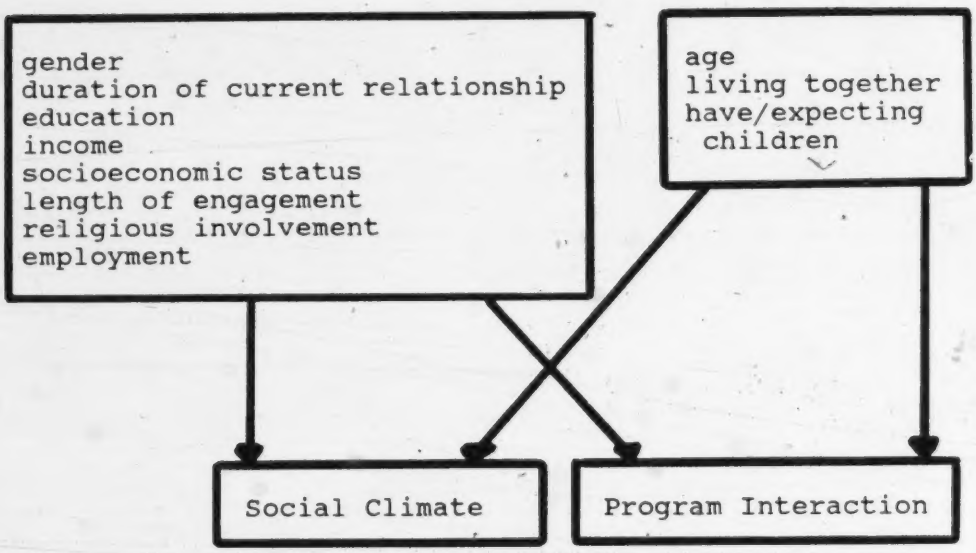


Figure 7 outlines the reduced model that was suggested by the stepwise regression analysis, using standardized beta coefficients. Religious involvement was the only variable that had a significant impact on the dependent variable of Social Climate at a $p < 0.05$. When all other variables were controlled, a one point higher level of religious involvement resulted in a 0.17 point increase in the Social Climate factor for participants in this study. Table 14. outlines the results of the regression analysis. The religious involvement variable explains 2.92% of the variance in the Social Climate factor.

Table 14. Results of the regression of social structural, and age or life cycle variables against the dependent variable of Social Climate.[a]

Variable	Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient	T-value
Constant	9.42	0.00	15.90
Religious Involvement	0.28	0.17	2.04

[a] F-value = 4.180 ($p < 0.0428$) (df = 139)
[a] R^2 = 0.0292
[a] Adj. R^2 = 0.0222

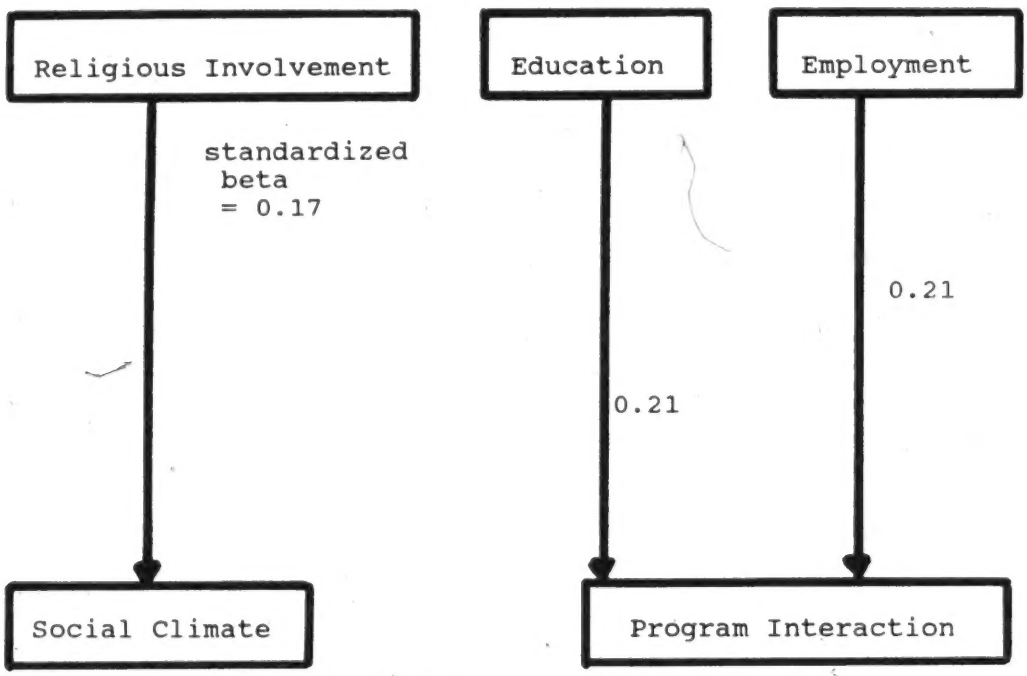
Highest level of education completed at the time of marriage preparation and employment at the time of marriage preparation were the two variables that had significant impacts on the dependent variable of Program Interaction at a $p < 0.05$. When all other variables were controlled, a one point higher level of education resulted in a 0.21 increase in the Program Interaction factor for the participants in this study. Also, being employed resulted in a 0.21 increase in the Program Interaction factor, when all other variables were controlled. Table 15 outlines the results of the regression analysis. The education and employment variables explain 6.99% of the variance in the Program Interaction factor.

Table 15. Results of the regression of social structural, and age or life cycle variables against the dependent variable of Program Interaction.[a]

Variable	Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient	T-value
Constant	4.27	0.00	7.77
Education	0.23	0.21	2.51
Employment	0.90	0.21	2.50

[a] F-value = 5.189 ($p < 0.0067$) ($df = 138$)
[a] $R^2 = 0.0699$
[a] Adj. $R^2 = 0.0565$

Figure 7. The reduced model of the relationship between the backgrounds of the marriage preparation learners (antecedents) and the nature of the agent-learner relationship.



Step Two

In step two of testing Model Two the social structural, and age or life cycle variables remain the same. The tested model includes as social structural variables gender, duration of current relationship, education, income, perceived socioeconomic status, length of engagement, religious involvement, and employment. The tested model includes as age or life cycle position variables age, whether the couple lived together before marriage, and presence of children. Along with these independent/control variables, the Social Climate factor and the Program Interaction factor are entered as independent variables in the stepwise regression procedure (entry level = 0.05). The dependent variable is marital quality at the time the questionnaire was completed. Figure 8. is a representation of the tested model.

Figure 8. The tested model of the relationship between the backgrounds of the marriage preparation learners (antecedents), the nature of the agent-learner relationship, and subsequent marital quality.

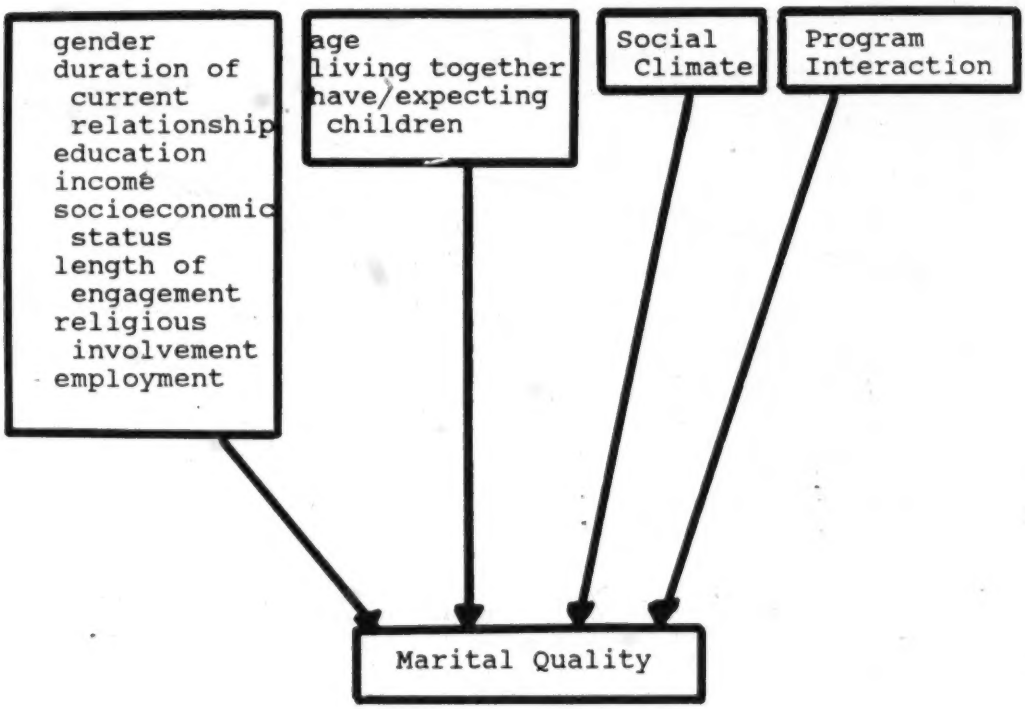


Figure 9 outlines the reduced model that was suggested by the stepwise regression analysis, using standardized beta coefficients. Living together at the time of the marriage preparation program and Program Interaction were the two variables that had significant impacts on the dependent variable of marital quality at a $p < 0.05$. When all other variables were controlled a one point higher level of program interaction resulted in a 0.19 increase in the marital quality score. Also, having lived together[5] resulted in a 0.18 decrease in the marital quality score. Table 16 outlines the results of the regression analysis. The program interaction and living together variables explain 7.34% of the variance in marital quality.

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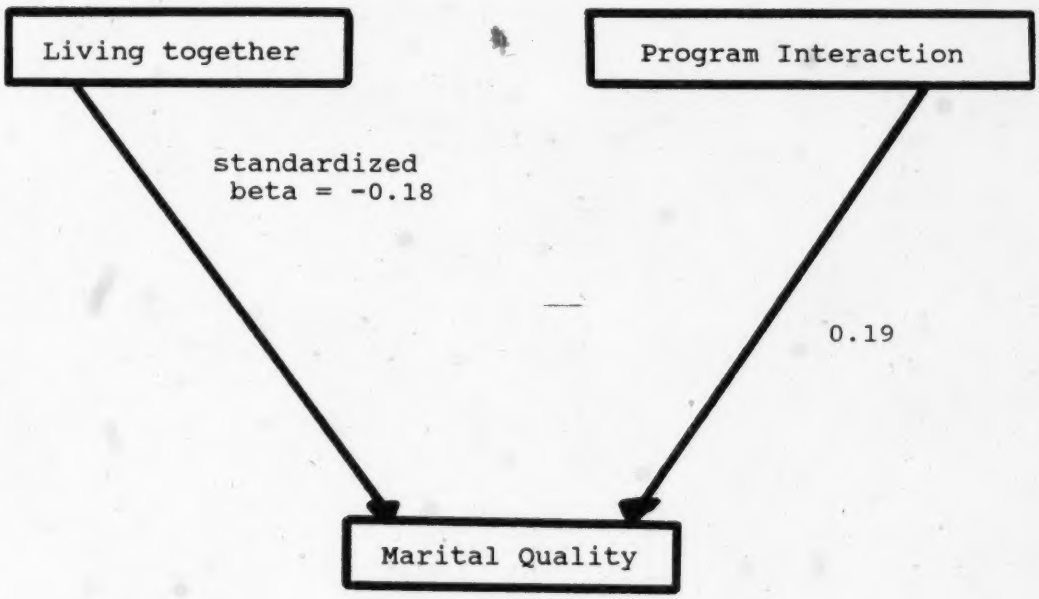
5 Living together is coded as a 1, whereas not living together at the time of marriage preparation is coded as a 0.

Table 16. Results of the regression of social structural, age or life cycle variables, social climate and program interaction against the dependent variable of marital quality.[a]

Variable	Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient	T-value
Constant	110.29	0.00	28.77
Program interaction	1.38	0.19	2.31
Living together	-4.70	-0.18	-2.24

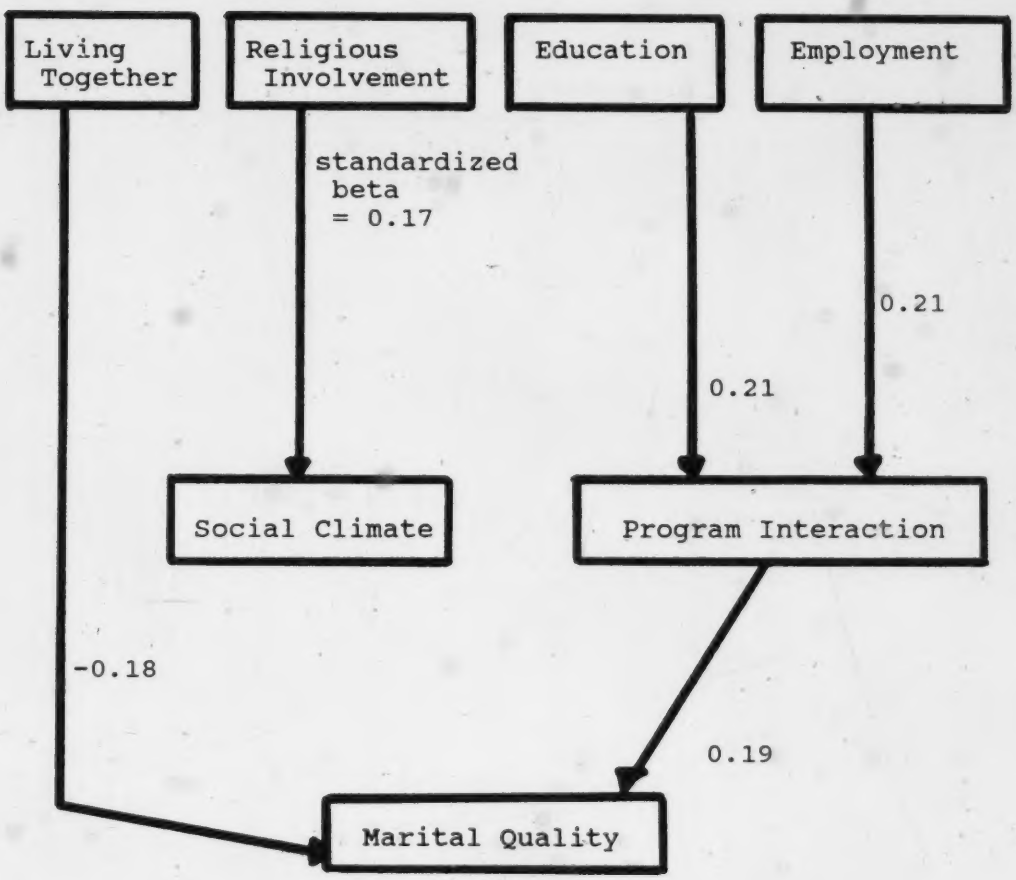
[a] F-value = 5.462 ($p < 0.0052$) (df = 138)
[a] $R^2 = 0.0734$
[a] Adj. $R^2 = 0.0599$

Figure 9. The reduced model of the relationship between the backgrounds of the marriage preparation learners (antecedents), the nature of the agent-learner relationship, and subsequent marital quality.



In combining the variables that were significant in step one with those that were significant in step two, it is clear that the highest level of education completed at the time of marriage preparation and employment have an indirect effect on marital quality via the program interaction factor. Figure 10. combines Figure 8. and 9. to show that these are indirect effects.

Figure 10. The reduced model of the relationship between the backgrounds of the marriage preparation learners (antecedents), the nature of the agent-learner relationship and subsequent marital quality.



CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

Sample Demographics

Similarity in the characteristics of the marriage preparation treatment group and the no marriage preparation control group on basic demographics such as gender, education, perceived socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, living together before marriage, children, and employment, allows the researcher to conclude that the differences found in the analysis are not simply a result of two very different demographic samples. The sample also appears to be similar to those samples used in previous studies using the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. For example, the religious affiliations and involvement are similar and so are the mean marital quality scores for the marriage preparation and no marriage preparation groups. Filsinger & Wilson (1983) found a mean total DAS score of 117.04 for 190 married, church based males, and a mean total DAS score of 117.63 for 190 married, church based females. In this study the mean total DAS score for the marriage preparation group was 116.77 and

117.88 for the no marriage preparation group. Therefore, the researcher suggests that the marital quality scores in this study are valid measures of these individual's marital quality.

One difference found in the Social Structural background of the treatment and control group was that the no marriage preparation control group had a higher percentage of people who attended premarital counseling. The reason for this is that couples who did not attend a marriage preparation program were often involved in a series of meetings with their marriage officiant where they received premarital counseling on a one officiant to one couple basis. The operationalized variable had stipulated that the premarital counseling was not just meeting with the marriage officiant to plan the wedding. Sometimes this premarital counseling involved using some index of relationship strengths and weaknesses, such as PREPARE, and discussing it afterwards. Other couples explained that they had worksheets to fill out and discuss at meetings, and others were given books to read at home as a couple and as individuals. It appears that in some cases premarital counseling was a substitute for a formalized marriage preparation program, and in other

cases it was in addition to a formalized marriage preparation program.

Addressing Gaps and Issues in Past Research

The researcher was able to address some of the gaps and issues in the research. The researcher met the goal of the research being a long term evaluation because the treatment group participants had been married, on average, 1.88 years. Also, having the control group at the time of long term evaluation, instead of just at posttest (Markman & Floyd, 1980; Bagarozzi, Bagarozzi, Anderson & Pollane, 1984) allowed a more direct comparison of the two groups' data. The long term evaluation control group reduced the chance of uncontrolled environmental changes affecting only the treatment group in the study.

A number of communication-based marriage preparation programs were included in the study because the participants were not recruited through only one program or because they took a certain program. As a result many programs in the Edmonton area were a part of the evaluation. There were participants who had participated in marriage preparation programs at

agencies such as Family Life Education Council, Family Service Association of Edmonton, Pastoral Institute, the Catholic Archdiocese, and many others. The analysis did not focus on the specific agency where the program was offered, but more on the criteria that it had to be communication based and cover a number of topics such as some of the following: role expectations, conflict resolution, problem solving, sexuality, religion/values, relationship with in-laws, family and friends, finances, leisure activities, and family background.

From the discussion of the sample demographics, it is clear that the use of a well-developed scale, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, allowed comparison of the study with other studies using the same scale. The conceptual and operational definitions were clearly stated in the empirical model section and can be used by other researchers to critically analyze the following discussion of Model One and Model Two. Within the analysis of each model will be a discussion of the significant findings, and a comparison of the results of this study with previous studies.

Model One: The Effect of Participation in a Marriage Preparation Program

Discussion of the Significant Findings

The focus independent variable of the proposed Model One was the presence or absence of the socialization process which in this case was participation in a marriage preparation program. The researcher found that this socialization process did not have a direct effect on marital quality as proposed. The presence or absence of participating in a marriage preparation program did not have a long term direct impact on the individuals' later marital quality.

The one antecedent, social structural variable that did directly affect marital quality was whether or not the individual had participated in marital counseling. Individuals who had not participated in marital counseling had higher marital quality scores than individuals who had participated in marital counseling (see Table 13). This finding can be explained by the fact that most couples do not go to marital counseling until their marriage is in extreme

distress. Couples, on the whole, do not use marital counseling at the time that problems begin as a preventive tool for later marital distress (Goldenberg, 1983). Therefore, the individual who seeks marital counseling probably had lower than average marital quality before marital counseling, and this is probably still the case at the time of completing the questionnaire. This conclusion does not mean that marital counseling is not helping these individuals and their partners.

Comparison of the Results of this Study with Previous Studies

Because there is still a need for more long term evaluations of marriage preparation programs, there is only one study that measured a dependent variable similar to marital quality to allow direct comparison. Markman et al. (1988) found higher relationship or marital quality persisted at follow-up time. But it is not a complete surprise to find no effect in the study of focus, even though this finding is in opposition to Markman et al.'s, because even short-term evaluations had conflicting findings, some finding improved

relationship quality and others finding no such effect (Bagarozzi & Rauen, 1981). The small number of comparable studies that looked directly at relationship or marital quality, as suggested in the literature review, still makes it difficult to compare this study with previous ones in the area.

The theoretical framework of socialization led the researcher to expect to find a relationship between the socialization process and the outcome variable of marital quality. But, according to Brim (1966), the socialization process is affected by a number of things such as the formality of the agent-learner relationship, the power and support in the relationship and the group context of the person being socialized. As a result it is possible that only considering whether or not the individual was a part of the socialization process may not be enough to explain how the outcome variable is affected. Therefore, the researcher concludes that the reason the presence or absence of the socialization process did not explain the outcome marital quality is because the relationship between the socialization process and the outcome marital quality is more complex. The individual is impacted day after day by many socialization

experiences, and many of these may be directly and/or indirectly impacting marital quality. To say that simply attending a marriage program will result in a higher level of marital quality may be oversimplifying the goal of prevention of marital distress, and improvement of marital quality. A discussion of Model Two in the following section will consider whether this explanation is possible.

Model Two: The Effect of the Nature of the Agent-Learner Relationship and the Background of the Learner on Marital Quality

Discussion of the Significant Findings

Scale Development

The factor analysis resulted in two factors that measure the nature of the agent-learner relationship. The first factor included leadership satisfaction, program satisfaction and program enjoyment. These three variables were developed to operationalize the concept of social climate which Wheeler (1966, p.82) refers to as a "... subjective, attitudinal set ...". Therefore, the loading of these three variables together into one factor confirms that they are indicators of the concept they were developed to measure, that of social climate. This result offers credibility to the tested model. A high social climate score, the researcher suggests, is a positive measure of the nature of marriage preparation program experience.

The second factor included two variables that relate to the interaction of the individual in the marriage preparation program. One involves how much the learner (individual) interacted with the agent(s) (leaders), and the other involves how much opportunity the learner had to interact with the agent(s), regardless of whether or not they acted on this opportunity. High program interaction, as measured by this scale, is suggested by the researcher to be a positive measure of the nature of the marriage preparation experience.

The Reduced Model Two

This model addresses three possible relationships. The first is whether any of the social structural variables, or age or life cycle position variables affect directly the nature of the agent-learner relationship (i.e. preparation program experience). Because the nature of the agent-learner relationship is operationalized in two factors, social climate and program interaction, there are two possible direct effects for every antecedent variable.

Religious involvement, at the time of marriage preparation, was found to have the only statistically significant direct effect on Social Climate which is the subjective evaluation of the marriage preparation program experience (see Table 14). From the results it is clear that those who are more religiously involved and attend a marriage preparation program have a higher social climate score. Therefore, more religiously involved individuals who attend marriage preparation with their partner have a more positive marriage preparation program experience (i.e. enjoy the program more, are more satisfied with the program and the program's leadership) than those who are less religiously involved and attend the program. The researcher suggests that this may be a result of an already strong belief in the value of marriage and the family as is spoken of and exemplified during their religious involvement. As the more religiously involved couples are introduced to the idea of taking a marriage preparation course, they immediately recognize the benefits of such a program before they ever attend the program because of their underlying beliefs. This belief that the program will be of benefit may not be as strong in those who are not as religiously involved

with an institution that promotes marriage and the family so highly. Although religious involvement had a direct effect on how positively the individual viewed the marriage preparation program, religious involvement did not directly, or indirectly through social climate, have an effect on subsequent marital quality, which would have been what the prevention objective of marriage preparation suggested.

Education and employment, at the time of marriage preparation had statistically significant direct effects on the Program Interaction factor (see Table 15). From the results it is clear that individuals who had more education and were employed had more interaction with the marriage preparation program leaders, and also reported that they had a great deal of opportunity to interact in the program, whether or not they acted upon this opportunity. One explanation for this finding is that those who work or have a higher education, may in turn have higher self esteem, and so perceive themselves as being able to interact with the leaders and question or challenge them, or offer related information or experiences during the program. Also, those who work or who have attended more school have also had more experience with group

dynamics and being a part of educational experiences similar to marriage preparation which means they are more practiced and familiar with program interaction when they attend marriage preparation.

The second relationship that Model Two addresses is whether or not the social structural backgrounds, age or life cycle position, social climate factor or program interaction factor have a direct effect on the subsequent marital quality. Two variables had such a direct effect, living together and program interaction (see Table 16). Within the group of participants who took marriage preparation, those who were not living together at the time of marriage preparation had higher marital quality at long term evaluation than those who were living together. There are a couple of possible explanations that researchers may want to consider. One is that living together before marriage does not "prepare" couples for marriage, even though many of these couples say that they are living together to make sure the relationship will work and be of a high marital quality. Another is that those who did not live together at the time of marriage preparation are still in a honeymoon-type atmosphere with higher levels of romanticism in their relationship (Crosby, 1985).

This honeymoon atmosphere explanation is weak because the majority of participants had been married at least one year, which means they were likely past the honeymoon stage.

Individuals who took marriage preparation and who had more program interaction tended to have higher marital quality. One explanation of this finding is that those who interacted more in the program were more committed to learning from the program and therefore gained more from the experience resulting in higher marital quality. Also, more program interaction could also be related to more commitment and interaction in the couple relationship, which in turn resulted in higher marital quality.

The third relationship that Model Two addresses is whether or not there are any indirect effects of the social structural variables, or age or life cycle position variables on subsequent marital quality, through the nature of the agent-learner relationship. Two indirect effects were found via the program interaction measure of the nature of the agent-learner relationship experience. The highest level of education completed and employment had indirect effects on marital quality via program interaction. The more

educated marriage preparation participant, and consequently the participant who tended to have more interaction in the program, had a higher level of marital quality at long term follow-up. Whereas a marriage preparation participant who entered the program being less educated consequently tended to interact less in the program and had a lower level of marital quality at long term follow-up. Similarly, learners employed at the time of marriage preparation, tended to have more interaction with the agents, and had a higher level of marital quality at long term follow-up. Directly the highest level of education completed and being employed at the time of marriage preparation did not have an effect, there was only an indirect effect as explained above.

The relationships found in this model do appear to support the researcher's suggestion in the discussion of Model One that it is a more complex relationship between marriage preparation programs and marital quality than simple attendance versus non-attendance. To say that simply attending a marriage program will result in a higher level of marital quality does appear to be oversimplifying the goal of prevention of marital distress, and improvement of marital quality.

Comparison of the Results of this Study with Previous Studies

This study is unique in that it evaluated the long term effects of marriage preparation programs by testing two models based on socialization theory. In past studies, it was not always clear upon which theoretical framework the studies were developed. Therefore, this study cannot be compared with any previous studies in the same content area using the same theoretical framework. Hopefully future research will be as clear with respect to their theoretical framework so that this study can be used in comparisons in the future.

The social structural variables, and age or life cycle position variables have been used in other studies. Because past researchers did not clearly state whether or not variables such as age, gender, level of education, living together, etc. were tested for significance, or were merely included as descriptive statistics, it is hard to compare all the variables this researcher found as significant or nonsignificant. Any variables not discussed in Model One or Two as statistically significant were found from

the regression analysis to be statistically nonsignificant. This information can be used in future studies to determine what variables are helpful to include as predictors of marital quality. There is no need to include in study after study variables that consistently are nonsignificant. This nonsignificance should be reported in the literature, and then new variables should be considered in lieu of variables that have shown little explanatory power in understanding marital quality in the past. For example if income appears to be nonsignificant in three or four scientifically sound studies of the long term effect of marriage preparation program evaluation, then it should be dropped from future studies, and new ideas should be tried.

Possible Reasons for Nonsignificant Findings in Model One and Model Two

The focus here is on why the marriage preparation program participation variable was not significant in Model One, and why the social climate variable was not significant in Model Two. These are the focus because the main reason for doing this study was to determine the long term effect of marriage preparation programs on marital quality, and whether the perceived nature or quality of the marriage preparation program experience had an effect.

One reason for the lack of significant relationship of these two variables with marital quality (i.e. marriage preparation participation and social climate) could be that those who volunteered for the survey were in moderate or high quality marriages. Although there was variability in marital quality scores, and there were scores below the average according to the DAS manual, there was only one clinically significant score (experiencing extreme marital distress). The clinically significant score was in the no marriage preparation control group. As often occurs when one uses a volunteer sample, those in

very poor quality marriages do not volunteer for the study. The researcher heard comments a few times, such as "one couple I could suggest for the study has a marriage that is 'on the rocks' so I do not want to give you their names". Comments such as these suggest couples were filtered out who were possibly in the clinically significant category. Having a pre-test, posttest and follow-up design may have solved this problem somewhat, but even with that design, often those whose marriages are in extreme marital distress drop out of the study before the final follow-up.

Another possible reason is that some of the premarital counseling that occurs has the same effect as the formalized marriage preparation program. As a result, the effect of the marriage preparation program may be being neutralized by the effect that premarital counseling is having on a portion of the no marriage preparation control group. In future analysis it will be helpful to divide the study participants into three groups. One group has not had premarital counseling or marriage preparation, a second group has had only premarital counseling and the third group has had only a formalized marriage preparation program. It would be helpful in doing this analysis to have details of what

occurred in the premarital counseling sessions and the duration of the premarital counseling experience. For example, a half hour of premarital counseling does not compare directly to a marriage preparation program of fifteen or more hours.

One other important point to remember is that even those variables that were significant did not explain very much of the variance in marital quality. The researcher suggests that the lack of significance of many variables and the low R-squared for Model One and Model Two may show the complexity of marital relationships and the multitude of variables and events that can directly and indirectly effect the individual's marital quality. The researcher does not think this needs to be something for which social science researchers apologize. This complexity should be a challenge for those who do future research in the area of marriage preparation programs and/or marital quality.

Implications for Future Research

In order to deal with the issue raised that there were no individuals in the clinically significant range for marital quality, future research should test this same model with the addition of two comparison groups. A comparison group of individuals who are in marital counseling with their partner, and who have not taken a marriage preparation program (or formalized premarital counseling), along with a comparison group of individuals who are in marital counseling who have taken a marriage preparation program should be included along with the present treatment group and control group.

With this design it would be possible to test whether there are more clinically significant marital quality scores in the no marriage preparation group, suggesting more cases of extreme marital distress for this group. From such a finding, a researcher could suggest that marriage preparation makes a difference in that it prevents very low marital quality, that is, it prevents high marital distress that is more likely to lead to divorce of the partners. The tested model in this study already includes the variable of marital

counseling. However, there were not enough participants who had participated in marital counseling, nor could it be determined from the data if the marital counseling had occurred in the past or was presently occurring.

Implications for Marriage Preparation Programs

Both the significant and nonsignificant findings are important to educators, leaders and program planners in the field of marriage preparation and prevention. The finding that simply participating in a marriage preparation program does not affect marital quality should be a challenge to those working in the marriage preparation field to offer well-developed and implemented programs. For example, because the level of program interaction has a direct effect on marital quality, it is important for educators to offer programs that are not lecture style but learner-agent interactive. The researcher suggests including interactive tasks where couples work through exercises that cover issues such as communication styles, how they deal with anger, how they will make decisions, financial issues, family and friends issues, and any

other pertinent issues. The important focus is that both members of each couple are active, not just listening to information on communication styles, how they to deal with anger, etc. Practicing using skills taught by facilitators is another way for marriage preparation participants to be actively involved in the experience. Finally, the use of group work where couples work with other couples is another way to increase the amount of interaction taking place in a marriage preparation program. Experiential learning where participants interact with their leaders allow more program interaction and so should be the style used in marriage preparation programs so the couples will achieve higher marital quality at a later time.

In addition, marriage preparation programmers and leaders need to deal with the less educated and the unemployed participants having lower levels of program interaction, and subsequent lower levels of marital quality. If the marriage preparation programs can, at the onset, help the participants feel like they have something to offer (i.e. enhance the participants self esteem) to the marriage preparation experience, then the program interaction of the participants can be improved, which in turn will improve their tendency to

have higher levels of marital quality at one to three years of marriage. The researcher suggests that by explaining skills in simple terms, not the jargon of marriage and family professionals, the less educated and unemployed participants will feel more comfortable in interacting in the program because they will more clearly understand the skills being taught. Also further investigation of the most effective learning styles for marriage preparation participants of lower educational levels would be helpful in the future. For example, a lower facilitator-to-couple ratio may be needed in marriage preparation programs for the lower educated so that they can attain a high level of program interaction through the help of their facilitator.

In conclusion, the researcher encourages those in the marriage preparation field to consider carefully how the findings of this study can be used creatively in offering high quality marriage preparation programs that can prevent later marital distress, prepare couples for the experience of married life and improve the later level of marital quality of their participants.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

EARLY MARRIED LIFE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

ID#

University of Alberta
Edmonton
Canada T6G 2E5

Department of Family Studies
Faculty of Home Economics
3-34 Assiniboia Hall, Telephone (403) 492-5771
Fax (403) 492-7219

January-March, 1990

Dear Participants,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study of early married life. This study is conducted under the auspices of the Family Studies Department at the University of Alberta. As the primary researcher on this project, I am very interested in what early married life is like for couples as the 1990's begin.

You and your spouse will each fill out a separate copy of the Early Married Life Survey.

**Please fill them out on your own, without consulting with your partner.

Each copy of the questionnaire should be placed in the envelope provided for you with the questionnaire. Please make sure you seal the envelope to ensure confidentiality and write the word "Completed" over the envelope seal.

Please be assured that your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence. Once the study has been completed, a short summary of the findings will be prepared. If you wish to have a copy of this summary sent to you, please fill in your address on the bottom of the consent form. If you have any questions regarding the questionnaire or require further information about the study, please contact me at 492-0374 or leave a message with the Family Studies General Office at 492-5771.

Thank you for your assistance in completing this Early Married Life Survey. Please mail the completed questionnaire and the consent form in the self-addressed, postage paid envelope as soon as possible or hand the envelope to the researcher if s/he is present.

Sincerely,

Z'Anne Harvey

(Ms.) Z'Anne Harvey (Researcher)

Brenda Munro

Dr. Brenda Munro (Advisor)

For office use only - Admin: SA TE
Meth: SB M GP-O
GP-U AD

Early Married Life Survey

Sex: Male or Female

ID#

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list. Circle the star under one answer for each item.

Col		Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occasionally Disagree	Frequently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
(17)	1 Handling family finances	*	*	*	*	*	*
	2 Matters of recreation	*	*	*	*	*	*
	3 Religious matters	*	*	*	*	*	*
	4 Demonstrations of affection	*	*	*	*	*	*
	5 Friends	*	*	*	*	*	*
	6 Sex relations	*	*	*	*	*	*
	7 Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)	*	*	*	*	*	*
	8 Philosophy of life	*	*	*	*	*	*
	9 Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws	*	*	*	*	*	*
	10 Aims, goals, and things believed important	*	*	*	*	*	*
	11 Amount of time spent together	*	*	*	*	*	*
	12 Making major decisions	*	*	*	*	*	*
	13 Household tasks	*	*	*	*	*	*
	14 Leisure time interests and activities	*	*	*	*	*	*
	15 Career decisions	*	*	*	*	*	*

	All The Time	Most Of The Time	More Often Than Not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
16 How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or termination of your relationship?	*	*	*	*	*	*
17 How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?	*	*	*	*	*	*
18 In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?	*	*	*	*	*	*
19 Do you confide in your mate?	*	*	*	*	*	*
20 Do you ever regret that you married (or lived together)?	*	*	*	*	*	*
21 How often do you and your partner quarrel?	*	*	*	*	*	*
22 How often do you and your mate get on each others nerves?	*	*	*	*	*	*

	Every Day	Almost Every Day	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
23 Do you kiss your mate?	*	*	*	*	*

	All Of Them	Most Of Them	Some Of Them	Very Few Of Them	None Of Them
24 Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?	*	*	*	*	*

How often do the following occur between you and your mate?

	Never	Less Than Once A Month	Once Or Twice A Month	Once Or Twice A Week	Once A Day	More Often
25 Have a stimulating exchange of ideas	*	*	*	*	*	*
26 Laugh together	*	*	*	*	*	*
27 Calmly discuss something	*	*	*	*	*	*
28 Work together on a project	*	*	*	*	*	*

These are some things about which couples sometimes agree or disagree. Indicate if either item caused differences of opinions or were problems in the past few weeks.

	Yes	No
29 Being too tired for sex	*	*
30 Not showing love	*	*

31 The stars on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy," represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Circle the star above the phrase which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Extremely Unhappy	Fairly Unhappy	A Little Unhappy	Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfect

(18) 32 Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship? Circle the letter for one statement.

A	I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does.
B	I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do all I can to see that it does.
C	I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does.
D	It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
E	It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
F	My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.

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In USA or Canada (416) 424-1736 In Canada: 95 Thorncliffe Park Drive, Suite 100, Toronto, Ontario, M4H 1L7 (416)[illegible]

EARLY MARRIED LIFE SURVEY

The final section of this survey will help the researcher understand how different backgrounds are related to individual's experiences in early married life. Please answer all the questions from your perspective, not your spouse's. Again, there are no right or wrong answers.

1. Please indicate the date today._____

2. Please circle the appropriate category:

   MALE FEMALE

3. In what month and year were you married?_____

4. In what month and year were you officially engaged (i.e. had told others)?_____

   (* If engaged, then broke up and re-engaged to the same person; please state length of first engagement, then length of time broken up for and then length of engagement that lead to marriage)

5. In what month and year did your relationship with your spouse begin (i.e. considered yourself girlfriend/boyfriend)?

   _____
   (month) (year)

6. How old are you right now?_____years.

7. What is your **total income of all members of your household** for this past year **before** taxes and deductions? (***Household means the family with whom you live; ***Income should include employment gross wages or salary; interest on RRSPs, savings bonds, children's allowance, etc.) (Please circle the appropriate category.)

   a. Under $5,000
   b. $5,000 - 9,999
   c. $10,000 - 14,999
   d. $15,000 - 19,999
   e. $20,000 - 24,999
   f. $25,000 - 29,999
   g. $30,000 - 34,999
   h. $35,000 - 39,999
   i. $40,000 - 44,999
   j. $45,000 - 49,999
   k. $50,000 - 54,999
   l. $55,000 - 59,999
   m. $60,000 - 64,999
   n. $65,000 - 69,999
   o. $70,000 - 74,999
   p. $75,000 - 79,999
   q. $80,000 - 84,999
   r. $85,000 - 89,999
   s. $90,000 - 94,999
   t. $100,000 - above

8. What is your socioeconomic status?

   a. LOWER CLASS
   b. MIDDLE CLASS
   c. UPPER CLASS

9. Do you have any children and/or are you expecting a child?

   a. YES
   b. NO (If NO, skip to question 11)

*10. If YES, you have children, please indicate the number of children in each age group.

   a. EXPECTING A CHILD _____
   b. 0-14 MONTHS OLD _____
   c. 15-35 MONTHS OLD _____
   d. 3 - 6 YEARS _____
   e. 7 - 17 YEARS _____
   f. 18 AND OVER _____

11. What is your religious affiliation? (Please circle.)

   a. ANGLICAN
   b. BAPTIST
   c. GREEK ORTHODOX
   d. JEWISH
   e. LUTHERAN
   f. MENNONITE
   g. LATTER DAY SAINTS
   h. PENTECOSTAL
   i. PRESBYTERIAN
   j. ROMAN CATHOLIC
   k. UKRANIAN CATHOLIC
   l. UNITED CHURCH
   m. PROTESTANT - UNSPECIFIED
   n. CHRISTIAN - UNSPECIFIED
   o. ISLAM
   p. OTHER EASTERN RELIGIONS
   q. JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES
   r. REFORMED
   s. SALVATION ARMY
   t. CHURCH OF GOD
   u. OTHER EASTERN ORTHODOX
   v. SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST
   w. OTHER: (Please specify)_____
   x. NO RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

12. How often would you be involved in an activity that is linked with your religious affiliation (For example: go to church, attend church meeting(s), etc.)? (Please circle appropriate category.)

    a. TWICE A WEEK OR MORE
    b. ONCE A WEEK
    c. ONCE EVERY TWO WEEKS
    d. ONCE A MONTH
    e. LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH, BUT AT LEAST A COUPLE OF TIMES A YEAR
    f. ONCE A YEAR
    g. NEVER OR NOT APPLICABLE

13. What is the <u>highest</u> level of education you have completed?

    a. LESS THAN GRADE 10
    b. GRADE 10 OR 11
    c. HIGH SCHOOL/GRADE 12
    d. SOME COMMUNITY COLLEGE OR TECH SCHOOL; NO DIPLOMA
    e. COMMUNITY COLLEGE OR TECHNICAL DIPLOMA
    f. SOME UNIVERSITY; NO DEGREE
    g. BACHELOR'S OR UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE
    h. MASTERS DEGREE OR DOCTORATE/PH.D.

14. Are you employed at the present time?

    a. YES
    b. NO (If NO, skip to question 17)

15. What kind of work do you normally do? That is, what is your occupation and job title?

    _____

16. What kind of business, industry or service do you work for? (examples: wheat farm, road maintenance, retail store, municipal police)

17. Did you live together before your wedding, and if so for how long?

    a. YES, for _____years and _____months. 85-86
    b. NO.

18. <u>Since your wedding</u>, have you participated in any marital counselling?

    a. YES
    b. NO

19. <u>Since your wedding</u>, have you and your spouse participated in a marriage enrichment or encounter program?

    a. YES
    b. NO

20. Before your wedding, did you and your future spouse participate in any premarital counselling (Do not include marriage preparation programs or visits with a clergy or Justice of the Peace to simply plan your wedding ceremony here please.)?

    a. YES
    b. NO

21. Before you married your spouse, did you attend a formalized marriage preparation program or classes with your spouse?

    a. YES (If YES, go to question 22)
    b. NO (If NO, skip to question 53)

If YES, please complete the following information about your marriage preparation experience:

22. Name of the Program_____

23. Sponsoring agency or church_____

24. Length of the Program _____ hours

25. Month(s) and Year attended program_____

26. How many couples were in your marriage preparation program? _____ couples.

27. Did you have the opportunity to work in smaller groups of couples?

    a. YES, in smaller groups of _____couples
    b. NO

28. What was the format of the marriage preparation program you attended?

    a. ONE WEEKEND
    b. ONCE A WEEK FOR A NUMBER OF WEEKS
    c. OTHER (please specify:)_____

29. How similar (like) or diverse (unlike) did the backgrounds of the couples in your marriage preparation program appear to be?

    a. COUPLES VERY DIVERSE IN BACKGROUND
    b. COUPLES A LITTLE DIVERSE IN BACKGROUND
    c. COUPLES SIMILAR IN BACKGROUND
    d. COUPLES VERY SIMILAR IN BACKGROUND
    e. I DO NOT KNOW OR I DO NOT REMEMBER.

30. What effect did the similarity or diversity of the group have on your marriage preparation program experience?

    a. NEGATIVE EFFECT
    b. NO EFFECT
    c. POSITIVE EFFECT

31. How much interaction did you as a participant in the marriage preparation program have with your leader(s)?

a. A GREAT DEAL OF INTERACTION WITH THE LEADER(S)
b. SOME INTERACTION WITH THE LEADER(S)
c. A LITTLE INTERACTION WITH THE LEADER(S)
d. VERY LITTLE INTERACTION WITH THE LEADER(S)
e. NO INTERACTION WITH THE LEADER(S)

32. How much opportunity did you have to interact with the leader(s), regardless of whether or not you acted on this opportunity?

a. A GREAT DEAL OF OPPORTUNITY TO INTERACT WITH THE LEADER(S)
b. SOME OPPORTUNITY TO INTERACT WITH THE LEADER(S)
c. A LITTLE OPPORTUNITY TO INTERACT WITH THE LEADER(S)
d. VERY LITTLE OPPORTUNITY TO INTERACT WITH THE LEADER(S)
e. NO OPPORTUNITY TO INTERACT WITH THE LEADER(S)

33. Overall, in what way did you view the power your leader(s) had in the marriage preparation program?

a. LEADERS WERE VIEWED AS THE AUTHORITY FIGURE
b. LEADERS WERE VIEWED AS FACILITATORS OR HELPERS
c. OTHER (please specify:)

_____

34. Circle the areas included in the marriage preparation program you took from the list below. (circle as many as appropriate)

a. COMMUNICATION
b. ROLE EXPECTATIONS
c. CONFLICT RESOLUTION
d. PROBLEM SOLVING
e. SEXUALITY
f. RELIGION/VALUES
g. RELATIONSHIPS WITH IN-LAWS, FAMILY & FRIENDS
h. FINANCES
i. LEISURE ACTIVITIES
j. FAMILY BACKGROUND

35. Were you living together at the time of the program? (please circle.)

a. YES
b. NO

36. What was your marital status at the time of the program?

a. OFFICIALLY ENGAGED (HAD TOLD OTHERS)
b. UNOFFICIALLY ENGAGED
c. DATING
d. PREVIOUSLY MARRIED AND ENGAGED

37. On the whole, was your marriage preparation group supportive of you as a participant? (Circle the appropriate number above the scale.)

0	1	2	3	4
EXTREMELY UNSUPPORTIVE	SOMEWHAT UNSUPPORTIVE	NEITHER SUPPORTIVE NOR UNSUPPORTIVE	SOMEWHAT SUPPORTIVE	EXTREMELY SUPPORTIVE

38. Rate how satisfied you were with the leadership of the marriage preparation program. (Circle the appropriate number above the scale.)

0	1	2	3	4
EXTREMELY UNSATISFIED	SOMEWHAT UNSATISFIED	NEITHER SATISFIED NOR UNSATISFIED	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	EXTREMELY SATISFIED

39. Rate how satisfied you were with the program in general. (Circle the appropriate number above the scale.)

0	1	2	3	4
EXTREMELY UNSATISFIED	SOMEWHAT UNSATISFIED	NEITHER SATISFIED NOR UNSATISFIED	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	EXTREMELY SATISFIED

40. Rate how much you enjoyed the marriage preparation program. (Circle the appropriate number above the scale.)

0	1	2	3	4
EXTREMELY UNENJOYABLE	SOMEWHAT UNENJOYABLE	NEITHER ENJOYABLE NOR UNENJOYABLE	SOMEWHAT ENJOYABLE	EXTREMELY ENJOYABLE

41. Describe your participation in the program.

a. I PARTICIPATED 100% VOLUNTARILY
b. TO BE MARRIED, I WAS REQUIRED TO TAKE THE PROGRAM, BUT I WANTED TO ATTEND. **REQUIRED BY: _____
c. TO BE MARRIED, I WAS REQUIRED TO TAKE THE PROGRAM AND I WENT ONLY BECAUSE I HAD TO. **REQUIRED BY: _____

42. At the time you took your marriage preparation program, how old were you? _____ years.

43. At the time you took your marriage preparation program, what was your **own personal total income** for that past year before taxes and deductions? (***Only include your income, not anyone else's ***Income should include employment gross wages or salary; interest on RRSPs, savings bonds, children's allowance, etc.) (Please circle the appropriate category.)

a. Under $5,000
b. $5,000 - 9,999
c. $10,000 - 14,999
d. $15,000 - 19,999
e. $20,000 - 24,999
f. $25,000 - 29,999
g. $30,000 - 34,999
h. $35,000 - 39,999
i. $40,000 - 44,999
j. $45,000 - 49,999
k. $50,000 - 54,999
l. $55,000 - 59,999
m. $60,000 - 64,999
n. $65,000 - 69,999
o. $70,000 - 74,999
p. $75,000 - 79,999
q. $80,000 - 84,999
r. $85,000 - 89,999
s. $90,000 - 94,999
t. $100,000 - above

44. At the time you took your marriage preparation program, what was your socioeconomic status?

a. LOWER CLASS
b. MIDDLE CLASS
c. UPPER CLASS

45. At the time you took your marriage preparation program, did you have any children and/or were you expecting a child?

a. YES
b. NO (If NO, go to question 47)

*46. If YES, you had children, please indicate the number of children in each age group at the time you took your marriage preparation program.

a. EXPECTING A CHILD _____
b. 0-14 MONTHS OLD _____
c. 15-35 MONTHS OLD _____
d. 3 - 6 YEARS _____
e. 7 - 17 YEARS _____
f. 18 AND OVER _____

47. At the time you took your marriage preparation program, what was your religious affiliation? (Please circle.)

a. ANGLICAN
b. BAPTIST
c. GREEK ORTHODOX
d. JEWISH
e. LUTHERAN
f. MENNONITE
g. LATTER DAY SAINTS
h. PENTECOSTAL
i. PRESBYTERIAN
j. ROMAN CATHOLIC
k. UKRANIAN CATHOLIC
l. UNITED CHURCH
m. PROTESTANT - UNSPECIFIED
n. CHRISTIAN - UNSPECIFIED
o. ISLAM
p. OTHER EASTERN RELIGIONS
q. JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES
r. REFORMED
s. SALVATION ARMY
t. CHURCH OF GOD
u. OTHER EASTERN ORTHODOX
v. SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST
w. OTHER: (Please specify)
x. NO RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

48. At the time you took your marriage preparation program, how often would you have been involved in an activity that was linked with your religious affiliation (For example: go to church, attend church meeting(s), etc.)?

a. TWICE A WEEK OR MORE
b. ONCE A WEEK
c. ONCE EVERY TWO WEEKS
d. ONCE A MONTH
e. LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH, BUT AT LEAST A COUPLE OF TIMES A YEAR
f. ONCE A YEAR
g. NEVER OR NOT APPLICABLE

49. At the time you took your marriage preparation program, what was the <u>highest</u> level of education you had completed?

a. LESS THAN GRADE 10
b. GRADE 10 OR 11
c. HIGH SCHOOL/GRADE 12
d. SOME COMMUNITY COLLEGE OR TECH SCHOOL; NO DIPLOMA
e. COMMUNITY COLLEGE OR TECHNICAL DIPLOMA
f. SOME UNIVERSITY; NO DEGREE
g. BACHELOR'S OR UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE
h. MASTERS DEGREE OR DOCTORATE/PH.D.

50. At the time you took the marriage preparation program, were you employed?

a. YES
b. NO (If NO, skip to question 53)

51. At the time of the marriage preparation program, what kind of work did you normally do? That is, what was your occupation and job title?

_____

52. At the time you took the marriage preparation program, what kind of business, industry or service did you work for? (examples: wheat farm, road maintenance, retail store, municipal police)

_____

53. Please feel free to add any comments regarding the survey you just completed, and any suggestions for improving you have.

54. If you choose to, please list the names, addresses and phone numbers of any couples you know who have been married at least 12 months and under 36 months. We will contact them and ask them if they would be willing to participate. You are not putting the couple in a position where they have to participate.

Name of Possible Couple Participants:
Their Address:

Their Phone Number:

***Please list as many couples as you would like.

******** THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY. ********
YOU HAVE REALLY HELPED US LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT EARLY MARRIED LIFE IS LIKE FOR COUPLES IN 1990. BE ASSURED THAT ALL THIS INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.

APPENDIX 2

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO USE AND COPY

DYADIC ADJUSTMENT SCALE

December 4, 1989

Z'Anne Harvey
Department of Family Studies
3-38 Assiniboia Hall
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
CANADA T6G 2E7

Dear Ms. Harvey:

You have my permission to reproduce and use the dyadic adjustment scale. You need not order the forms. You may, however, wish to order a copy of the new manual ($16.00). This has some helpful information. The special forms the publisher uses are handy but expensive, and you need not order them to do your research.

Good luck in your research study.

Sincerely,

Graham B. Spanier
Provost and Vice President
for Academic Affairs

GBS/nrh

APPENDIX 3

CONSENT FORM FOR EARLY MARRIED LIFE SURVEY

CONSENT FORM

EARLY MARRIED LIFE SURVEY

I, _____, agree to participate
(please print)
in the Early Married Life Study, being carried out by Z'Anne Harvey, a Masters student at the University of Alberta in the Family Studies Department.

I give my consent with the understanding that:

1. All the information will be kept confidential,
2. I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time if I feel it is necessary.
3. All the original questionnaires will be destroyed once the data is inputted to the computer and the study is complete.
4. The identification number is included on the questionnaire only so husband and wife data can be linked for statistical analysis.
5. I can receive a summary of the results of the study if I indicate I would like one with my name, address and postal code at the bottom of this page.

**** If you have further questions or concerns, please contact Z'Anne Harvey at 492-0374 or her supervisor Dr. Brenda Munro at 492-4528. Please note that this consent form will be separated from your questionnaire when it is received by the researcher.

Thank you again for agreeing to participate.

DATE:_____SIGNATURE:_____

If you would like a copy of the summary of the results, please state full address:

Name: _____
Address:_____
_____
Postal Code:_____

APPENDIX 4

ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR EARLY MARRIED LIFE SURVEY

APPROVAL

for

PROPOSAL ON HUMAN RESEARCH

This is to certify that HEATHER Z'ANNE HARVEY

a student in the DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY STUDIES

presented a proposal for a research project entitled:

LONG TERM EFFECTS OF MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAMS ON MARITAL QUALITY

and that the undersigned committee are now satisfied that the ethical criteria for human research have been met.

Date: December 4, 1989

Michael I. McBurney

Michael W. Gillespie

Elaine Murray

Signatures

APPENDIX 5

SCALE CONSTRUCTION TABLE FROM FACTOR ANALYSIS

Table 17. The rotated factor pattern for the factor analysis of 9 variables entered as the nature of the marriage preparation program experience scale for Model Two.[ab]

Variable	Factor # 1	2	3	4	5
Effect of similarity/ diversity of marriage prep. group	0.16	0.18	-0.07	0.08	0.48
Interaction rate	0.15	0.72 [d]	0.36	0.16	0.11
Opportunity to interact	0.11	0.79 [d]	-0.01	0.14	0.20
Group support	0.31	0.15	-0.17	0.45	-0.12
Leadership satisfaction	0.76 [c]	0.33	-0.07	0.11	0.12
Program satisfaction	0.72 [c]	0.13	0.31	0.27	0.31
Program enjoyment	0.70 [c]	-0.08	-0.47	0.19	0.16
Wanted to participate	-0.24	-0.19	0.59	0.04	-0.06
Perceived power of leaders	0.07	0.09	0.07	0.49	0.15

[a] Varimax rotation method
[b] Variables with a value over 0.70 were considered strong members of that factor.
[c] Social Climate factor
[d] Program Interaction factor